

Action Grants - Grant Guidelines

Grant Description

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL) is accepting applications for Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Action Grants.

Action Grants provide funding of up to \$10,000 per project for high-impact initiatives that strengthen library services and create lasting community benefit. These grants support libraries in addressing pressing local needs, deepening partnerships, and building organizational capacity.

Projects may include, but are not limited to: community-focused services, professional development for library staff, trustees, or volunteers, planning studies, community-responsive collections, programming supplies and materials, outreach initiatives, accessibility upgrades, and technology enhancements.

These grants advance OCL's priority of Libraries as Community Catalyst, supporting libraries in understanding and responding to community needs through deep engagement, effective partnerships, and strategic resource sharing. Additional information is available in the Office of Commonwealth Libraries Five Year Plan.

No specific funding amounts are set aside for particular project types. Awards will be made to the most competitive proposals that demonstrate meaningful community engagement, equitable partnerships, and responsive service design.

Funding for this opportunity is contingent upon OCL receiving its federal award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

This project is made possible by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Commonwealth Libraries.

Timeline

Anytime	Get Ready to Apply Please review the steps in the Get Ready to Apply section of this LibGuide before the applications open.
May 18 - June 30, 2026	Submit Intent to Apply Form This is a required step to be granted access to the application. Intent to Apply forms must be received by June 30, 2026.
June 9 - July 9, 2026	Applications accepted The application will close at Noon on Thursday, July 9, 2026.
July 2026	Application review period
September 2026*	Awards announced
January 2027 - June 2027	Awardees complete grant projects
June 30, 2027	Reimbursement requests deadline and Grant activities end (all funds encumbered)
July 30, 2027	Final Reports due

**Actual date dependent on PDE review and approval period.*

Eligibility

Organizations interested in applying for an Action Grant must submit an Intent to Apply form by June 30, 2026.

The form can be found here: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/CZkTvyvt8C>

You will not be able to view or complete the application in eGrants without this step.

If your organization does not receive notification that your Intent to Apply Form is approved, you will not be able to apply.

The following Pennsylvania library entities are eligible to apply:

- Independent public libraries
- Public local library branches or bookmobiles (Applications must be submitted by the main library on behalf of the branch or bookmobile.)
- Public library systems
- Library system member libraries
- District library centers
- Public school libraries or media centers
- Private school libraries or media centers
- Academic libraries
- State correctional institution libraries

Applications must be submitted by the legal entity responsible for grant management, using its organizational identifiers (AUN, UEI, FEIN, and SAP Vendor Number).

Eligible Purchases

Action Grant funds may be used for a wide range of project-related expenses. All purchases must be **reasonable, necessary, and directly tied to the goals of the proposed project**. Eligible expenses may include (but are not limited to):

Salaries / Wages / Benefits

- Salaries and benefits for staff (project-specific staff, additional hours for part-time staff, or temporary coverage for reassigned staff)

Consulting Fees

- Consulting or contractual services (consultant must be identified and qualified in the application)

Travel

- Travel and training expenses (for project-related staff development or travel)

Supplies / Materials

- Furnishings (when integral to the success of the project, not for general use)
- Hardware, software, and/or technology (when specifically needed to support the project)
- Library materials (when directly tied to a new or improved program or service; not for general collection development)
- General supplies and materials (necessary to support the project)

Services

- Evaluation (costs to measure project outcomes and effectiveness)
- Digitization services (outsourced when specialized and cost-effective)
- Postage and printing (for project-related materials)

Indirect Costs

- Indirect costs (must follow all applicable federal and state guidelines)

Ineligible Expenses

Please see the [Grant Fund Restrictions](#) for more information on ineligible expenses.

Important Note: Items such as furnishings, technology, or library materials may be requested and funded **only as part of a new or enhanced program or service**. Acquisition of these items alone should **not** be the primary purpose of the project. The focus must be on delivering impact through engagement, programming, services, or innovation.

Application Instructions

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) uses an online grant application system, eGrants, to simplify and streamline the process of applying for and managing grants. Before you can apply for this grant, you must complete all the steps found in the [Get Ready to Apply section](#) of this LibGuide and submit an Intent to Apply Form.

Important Things to Know Before Submitting a Grant Application:

- Organizations must have an approved [Intent to Apply](#) form to be granted access to the application. The Intent to Apply form will close on June 30, 2026.

- Once added as an Approved Agency, applicants can only access the eGrants application through [MyPDESuite](#) using a Keystone ID.
- Staff from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL) will manage the application process in the eGrants system and will notify applicants about the status of their application and award of funds.
- All applications must be submitted in eGrants by **Thursday, July 9, 2026 at 12:00 PM (NOON)**. Late submissions will **not** be accepted or reviewed.

Additional tips:

- When logged into the eGrants platform, you can access the "Getting Started Guide" (located on the right side of the webpage on the 'Home' tab) . This resource covers the basic functions of eGrants.
- **Use the eGrants navigation buttons.** DO NOT use the browser buttons (i.e., the "Back" button).
- **Save frequently.** If you allow your screen to sit idle for more than 30 minutes, you will lose the data entered since your last save and will have to re-enter it.
- **Avoid using special characters** in the fields such as \, /, *, &, %, #, etc.
- **Mark all sections "Complete"** before clicking the FINAL "Complete Step" button to submit for review.

Submission Instructions

All sections of the application must be marked as 'Complete' to activate the final 'Complete' button to submit the application for review.

- To update the application's workflow status from "Data Entry" to "Grant Application Received," click the "Complete Step" button at the bottom of the application's main page.
- If the "Complete Step" button is greyed out or unclickable, it means that one or more sections of the application are still incomplete. To resolve this, make sure all sections are marked as "Complete." A checkmark next to each section on the main page confirms that it has been completed.
- Before clicking the FINAL "Complete Step" button, applicants are encouraged to take time to fully and carefully review the entire to ensure everything is complete and correct.
- To officially submit an application, applicants must click the **FINAL "Complete Step"** button once within the eGrants system. If this isn't clicked, the application won't be considered submitted for peer review.
- After the application is submitted, the eGrants system will show the workflow status as **"Application Received" OR "Submitted for Peer Review"** in the steps of the application workflow. This is the only confirmation and notification an applicant will receive to show that the application was submitted.
- Once the review process is complete, all applicants will be contacted with the next steps as it pertains to them.

If you have questions about how to use the eGrants system or run into technical issues, please contact the eGrants help desk at ra-egrantshelp@pa.gov.

Application Questions

A PDF of the eGrants application questions can be found here: https://pa.gov.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=84677756

Budget Information

The maximum award that may be requested on your application is \$10,000.

To understand which budget category your project costs should be listed, please refer to the [Budget section of this LibGuide](#).

Keep in mind that there [are restrictions on the use of federal funds](#).

Evaluation Criteria

The Action Grants Scoring Rubric can be found here: https://pa.gov.libguides.com/ld.php?content_id=84947382

Grantee Requirements

General requirements for grantees:

- **Federal Compliance (Uniform Grant Guidance)**
Awarded grantees must comply with all applicable federal regulations under the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR Part 200).
- **Reporting Requirements**
Awarded grantees must complete and submit all required reports, including final reports and any additional documentation requested by the Office of Commonwealth Libraries (OCL), to support state and federal reporting.
- **Financial Compliance and Documentation**
Grant funds must be used only for approved purposes within the grant period. Sub-recipients are required to maintain complete financial records, including receipts and invoices. These records may be requested and reviewed by OCL at any time and must be provided upon request.
- **Acknowledgment of Funding**
All materials and communications related to the project must acknowledge support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The credit line should read:

"This project is made possible in part by federal funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Commonwealth Libraries"

FAQs

Responses to Frequently Asked Questions can be found here: <https://pa-gov.libanswers.com/search/?t=0&g=11607&topics=Grants&adv=1>

You may submit questions here: <https://pa-gov.libanswers.com/>
Please select "Grants" as the category when submitting your question.