



STEM Application Guidelines

(Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics)

These Application Guidelines will be of assistance when preparing an LSTA STEM or STEAM Application. The guidelines bring together in an orderly fashion the basic information needed to prepare an application that meets LSTA requirements and is easily understood by reviewers, the State Library Board, and staff.

A number of persons with varying backgrounds will read the application. You should provide clear and understandable information. The application must stand on its own in conveying information about the proposed project.

The [State Library of Ohio LSTA Five-Year Plan 2013-2017](#) will also be of assistance when developing your proposal. All applications must address a need or activity articulated in one of the LSTA Five-Year Plan Goals: LSTA Goal 1, Learning: Engaging and Empowering Learning Experiences, LSTA Goal 2, Community: Community Anchor Institutions, LSTA Goal 3 Content: Discovery of Knowledge and Cultural Heritage or LSTA Goal 4, Access: Sustain Access to Knowledge.

Preliminary Information

All types of libraries which meet the Eligibility Requirements stated in the Request for Proposal Section V may apply for LSTA funds.

Matching Funds

A financial match of 25% of the total project cost is required from the institution. For example if the total project cost is \$66,666, the federal request would be \$50,000 and the local match would be \$16,666. The maximum amount of federal funds that can be without prior approval from the State Library is \$50,000. Local matching funds expenditures must be in local cash. For additional information on Matching Requirements see the [Budget FAQ](#).

Application Elements

Sections VII in the Request for Proposal discusses the elements which must be addressed in the grant proposal. Following is an explanation of the application components and the information which should be included in each. Before beginning to write the application it is advisable to read through the entire Request for Proposal, the Application Guidelines, the various FAQs, additional documents on the website and pertinent sections of the LSTA Five-Year Plan.

Title Page

Your Title Page should include the following information:

- A title which identifies the type of project for which you are applying.
- Name and contact information for the project coordinator.
- Name and contact information for the fiscal coordinator.
- Name and signature of administering official and treasurer.
- Legislative information for U.S. House, Ohio House, Ohio Senate.

Additional information and a sample Title Page can be found on the [Title Page guidelines](#).

Project Summary

Complete a [Project Summary](#), using the form found on the website. It should not exceed one page. Should your project be recommended for funding the Project Summary will be given to the State Library Board as an introduction to your project. The Project Summary should be **singled-spaced**.

Abstract (limited to 200 words, double-spaced)

This is a brief description of your project. Any reader should be able to understand the intent of the project. You may wish to consider framing the first sentence as "We intend to do _____ for _____ with this project."

Program Description

Write a narrative that addresses the four components listed and explained below. Limit the narrative to seven single-spaced, numbered pages. Use Appendices to provide supplementary material. Address the four sections of the narrative separately and in the same order in which they are listed below. Using the section as a header will assist reviewers in locating information in your proposal.

Reviewers from various types of libraries will read and evaluate applications. Your narrative must be clear, well organized, and with a minimum of technical jargon.

Review criteria are also listed for each section of the narrative. These criteria describe what the reviewers will be considering as they review proposals. Keep these application review criteria in mind when writing your narrative.

Library Users and Need

In this section you must describe why you are applying for a STEM project and justify the proposed project as a logical methodology to address the stated need/opportunity. The narrative should place an emphasis on the specific problem or issue you are addressing. You must articulate the community need or opportunity the project will address and provide evidence to demonstrate the need. This section should demonstrate an understanding of the community and the targeted population, barriers to their success and evidence that this project can work to address the stated need. In this section, you will

show reviewers your understanding of the targeted audience and the community using demographic and data sources as well as research or anecdotal evidence. Include information such as:

- Knowledge of community, the audience(s) being targeted, and a description of the process used to determine those needs.
- How the proposed project relates to the library's mission or long-range plans.
- Discussion as to how this project is a logical approach to address the stated need/opportunity and why it may be an innovative approach.
- Description of any preliminary work, pre-planning or activities previously implemented that would support the project.
- Awareness of similar projects completed by other institutions and a clear statement of whether and how this project replicates, improves or expands upon past practice(s).
- Statement of how the proposed project, as planned, will meet the identified need.

Review Criteria:

- Identification of a specific audience and their needs.
- Evidence that a thorough needs assessment was conducted, data resources and research used were appropriate and logical.
- Evidence that the project aligns with the goals of the library.
- Evidence of pre-planning and or investigation of resources (time, staff, money) required, and that there is an interest in the project.
- Awareness of similar projects and their successful outcomes.
- Evidence of innovative solutions or approach to the need/opportunity.
- Degree to which the project is likely to have an impact on the targeted population and/or community through measurable results or products.

Project Description

This section will provide details on what you will do to accomplish the project. It should be a two to three page overview of your entire project. Give specific information about the types of activities to be undertaken, number of programs, and/or the resources to be made available and so on. Include information on how the targeted population and the general public will be made aware of the project. The Project Description must include clearly stated and measurable objectives. Following the narrative, applicants must include a table or timeline of project activities with the expected completion dates and who is responsible for each activity. Include such information as:

- Clearly stated project goals and measurable objectives.
- The activities required to implement the project.
- The design, integration, and implementation of an evaluation method that will measure project results, findings, or products.
- General information about the roles and responsibilities of partners, if applicable.

Review Criteria:

- Evidence that the project proposes efficient, effective, and reasonable approaches to accomplish stated goals and objectives.
- Activities to be undertaken are clearly stated, reasonable, and resources needed are accounted for.
- Evidence that the methodology and design are appropriate to the scope of the project.
- Evidence that project activities and goals directly address the needs of the identified audience.
- Includes information on steps taken to prepare library and staff to implement the project and evidence that the project will complement current activities and programs and not detract from them.
- Attached timeline is clear and understandable, all activities are represented, responsibility assigned for each and completion dates are reasonable.

Expected Outcomes

In this section you will discuss how you will document and measure the success of the project and detail the anticipated and/or expected benefit to the targeted audience. You must also document how you will know if these outcomes have been met. Expected outcomes may be determined using quantitative data (e.g., numbers of service users, hits on the website, improved test scores). Other data used to answer this question may be more qualitative (e.g., feedback from teachers, comments from staff, administrative effectiveness). Outcomes are derived from changes in the areas of knowledge, skills, behavior or attitudes. Tools to be used in measuring changes in these areas may include assessments and observations, self-reports, official records, and tests. IMLS has developed excellent tools for the development of outcome-based evaluation. Applicants are highly encouraged to review these tools, <http://www.ims.gov/applicants/faqs.shtm>, and incorporate these concepts into their proposal. IMLS is now requiring the use of standardized questions to evaluate instructional activities for both staff and patrons. Applicants are encouraged to review the required questions and reporting format at [Instructional Surveys](#) as they develop their application and activities.

When describing the intended benefits of this project for the targeted audience, the library and the community at large include information such as:

- Describe the design, integration, and implementation of an assessment method and evaluation plan as well as specific tools that will measure and analyze project outputs, outcomes, findings, and products. Describe how the evaluation plan ties to project goals and objectives.
- Clear concept of how data will be collected and information used to further the objectives and goals of the project.
- What is the specific change that aligns to each outcome?
- How the project design allows for input, consensus building, and buy-in from others.
- How the project innovatively addresses issues that concern the library and will have a lasting impact on the stated need.

Review Criteria:

- Degree to which the section clearly delineates and explains expected outcomes and the form/formal those outcomes will take.
- Evidence that the project evaluation will provide reliable information on which to judge impact or base actions.
- Justification provided for each outcome and the specific change aligned to it.
- Degree to which all products and activities in proposal are tied to a specific outcome.
- Evidence that the tools and methods used to evaluate the project are sound and will illicit information sought; evidence that evaluation data will relates to project goals and will be used to understand and further the project.
- Degree to which evaluation plan ties directly to project goals through measurable project outcomes, findings, or products.

Sustainability

In this section you will need to discuss a plan to continue the project once the grant period is concluded. Provide as much documentation as possible on how this will be accomplished. More information on Sustainability can be found in the Request for Proposal and [Sustainability FAQ](#). Include information such as:

- The extent of ongoing institutional support to continue project activities.
- How evaluation methodology will be used to determine if the project should be continued and how it will be used to market to possible funders.
- The continuing benefits resulting from continuation of the project and the expertise and capacity for continuing project goals.
- The extent to which continuing the project will lead to positive change within the library and the library field.
- Funding options that are being evaluated for continuation of the project. Specific funding options/funders should be noted if already being explored.

Review Criteria:

- Evidence that the project's benefits can be sustained beyond the grant period.
- Evidence that the project may lead to a new model or product or change in literacy concepts.
- Degree to which the applicant has assessed and evaluated future funding options.

Budget

Detailed information on the Budget can be found in both the Request for Proposal and the [Budget FAQ](#). The Budget should be completed using the [Budget Form](#). Project Coordinators should work closely with the Fiscal Coordinator when preparing the budget. The Fiscal Coordinator will sign the contract and will be responsible for completing and signing cash requests and financial report forms. It is critical to the project's success that the Fiscal Coordinator is involved in the project at the planning stage.

The cash match is the amount the administering library will spend from local budget funds on the project. Matching funds must be in local cash. They may come from any source, as long as it is not other federal funds. For example, local operating funds, friends groups or PTO contributions, financial donations from partners, other grant funds or gifts or cash raised through fund-raising efforts are all acceptable.

The Budget Form allows for a brief narrative and justification for major components within the budget. You must indicate the reasons behind the selection of items and indicate their purpose in fulfilling the stated objectives of the proposal.

The federal government now allows all applicants to request indirect costs should they so choose. Indirect costs should be listed under "Services." Applicants may waive the indirect costs, request a de minimus amount of up to 10% (and indicate the amount) or request an already negotiated federal indirect cost rate and provide documentation of the amount. Indirect costs may only be calculated on the federal amount and your request may not exceed \$50,000 in federal funds, including any indirect costs.

Spec sheets or bids, vendor detail of services, maintenance agreements, draft contracts and so on should be included as appendices.

Appendices

You may submit other attachments of your choosing as part of your application package, but do not overload the reviewers with too much information. These attachments should include only specifically required information or information that will supplement the narrative. Appendices should help reviewers understand and evaluate the project but they should not be used to answer narrative questions.

Appendices include, but are not limited to:

- Short resume (no more than 2 pages) of the Project Coordinator, indicating that the Project Coordinator has an MLIS or Library Media Specialist Certification.
- One page publicity plan. This should include the variety of media and other means the library will use to reach the community to announce the project and to provide updates on the project. The publicity plan should also include how the library will reach out to the target audience and how they will share the results of the project with other libraries and interested organizations.
- Bid specs, vendor quotes, draft contracts, etc. to support and justify budget items.

The State Library encourages projects to include partners. Appendices may include [Partnership Statement\(s\)](#), and/or letters of support from formal and informal partners.