



**AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)
SUBGRANT PROGRAM GUIDANCE
APRIL 2021**

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSL) is pleased to announce that in lieu of this year's competitive grants cycle, we will be providing funds through the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). MSL will still support the statewide grant funded projects. This new funding opportunity has led to a reevaluation of the grants application and management process. What follows is an overview to program changes. We believe that these changes will help systems use the funds more effectively, and provide your stakeholders with valuable information on the impact that libraries have in communities. This funding opportunity is still very new, and the guidance provided here is subject to change as we learn more.

SUMMARY

- The American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) is the result of the federal stimulus bill. Maryland has received a one-time award of \$3,319,475.
- The bulk of the award will be distributed through a competitive grant process.
- These funds must be spent by the end of the grant cycle, June 30, 2022.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The guidance MSL has received from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is broad by design, as different communities have different needs. The stated goals from IMLS are as follows:

- A. To enable libraries to reach residents with internet hotspots, accessible Wi-Fi, and other digital inclusion efforts, particularly in support of education, health, and workforce development needs.
- B. To provide rapid emergency relief to libraries across the country, allowing them to safely respond to the pandemic and implement public health protocols;
- C. To support library services that meet the needs of communities throughout the U.S., including costs such as personnel, technology, training, materials, supplies, equipment, and associated indirect costs; and
- D. With respect to (a), (b), or (c), reach tribal and museum partners best positioned to assist with pandemic response efforts, in addition to traditionally eligible library entities, where appropriate.

With this in mind, MSL has generated a preliminary list of focus areas that we are looking to support:

- A. Workforce Development
- B. Digital Equity and Inclusion
- C. Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism
- D. Developing New Service Models
- E. Social/Physical Distancing measures (includes some types of building configurations or optimizing outdoor spaces)

EXAMPLE ALLOWABLE EXPENSES BY FOCUS AREAS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Funding workforce training spaces
- Prison to public library workforce
- Expanding workforce development mobile unit (bookmobiles) program
- Microcertification and support to libraries to provide this service
- Statewide public programming for workforce development skills
- Marketing/promoting workforce development resources through media partners

DIGITAL EQUITY AND INCLUSION

- TV white space in rural areas
- ADA workstation/software refresh
- Expansion of community WiFi antenna
- Providing enhanced WiFi capacity for mobile units
- Providing additional mobile units (WiFi enabled bookmobiles) to systems in need
- Providing equipment to libraries for public programming
- Expand Media Mentorship program to build children's digital literacy skills

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND ANTI-RACISM

- Public facing EDI focused community training
- Creating a public history/oral history project viewing the pandemic through an EDI lens

DEVELOPING NEW SERVICE MODELS

- Supporting public library collection budgets (physical and e-material)
- Expanded hours support
- Addressing food insecurity
- Develop new agency website
- Creating reciprocal partnerships with museums

SOCIAL/PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES

- Shelving replacement at LBPD
- Replacing water fountains with touchless bottle fillers
- Hardware/software that integrates with existing people-counters to help monitor capacity limits at branches
- Furnishings

SUPPORTING NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA FOR APPLICATIONS

In your application, we ask that you provide data that identifies the need in your community and how your project will address the needs of underserved populations. Some sources referenced by IMLS as strong indicators of need include:

- [Poverty/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#) (SNAP)
- [Unemployment](#)
- [Broadband availability](#)

SUCCESSFUL APPLICATIONS

Successful applications will address the following:

- Clearly describe the project;
- Identify the need using data;
- Identify the focus area(s);
- Identify the goal(s) to be addressed;
- Identify WHO the target community members are and HOW the project will benefit them;
- Identify partners (schools, non-profits, community groups, etc.) who will help complete the project;
- Describe the institution's capacity to achieve the goals of the project;
- Describe how the project will continue beyond the grant period;
- Describe the intended outcomes and what indicators you will use to measure success.

REPORTING ON AWARDS

With several grant cycles running simultaneously, it is important that we institute and adhere to a more rigorous reporting schedule than what has been done in the past. With this in mind:

- Your grant liaison will periodically check on your grant status.
- Interim and final reports will include not only outputs (how many people attended, how many items purchased, etc.), but address how the project has achieved its intended outcomes, and the impact of the project on the community. MSL will not process any requests for reimbursement until the updates have been approved by your grant liaison.
- We will ask for qualitative evidence of the project's impact, such as photos and stories from customers and staff; additionally, depending on the project, we may provide additional required questions for customer surveys to assess a program's impact.
- One important new aspect of the final report will be the inclusion of the following type of question:
 - What were the project's intended outcomes, their corresponding indicators, and how did the project address each one? (please include addendums, such as photos, impact stories, surveys, etc. to support this reporting).

SCHEDULE FOR GRANTS CYCLE

- May 14 - New EGMS is live
- May 17-19? - webinar on applying for LSTA awards; webinar on ARPA awards (addendum to LSTA webinar)
- May 17-June 1 (May 31 is a holiday) - applications accepted. I think for the ARPA awards, we ask people to submit the bulk through the new EGMS, but ask them to send additional information (we'll have to work out what that looks like sooner rather than later)
- June 1-21 - application review process.
- June 25 - announce awards/distribute NOGAs for signature
- July 1 - start date
- September 30 - (on or about) Liaison check in call
- January 31 - Interim reports due / (ARPA quarterly update due)
- June 30 - Grant cycle ends
- August 1 - Final reports due