

## **Division of Library and Information Services Florida American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Guidelines**

The Florida Department of State has received \$6,735,385 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) according to the provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act (Public Law 117-2).

### **Purpose**

“To achieve the American Rescue Plan Act’s purposes with respect to Grants to States, this funding is to be used by September 30, 2022, in helping communities respond directly and immediately to the pandemic, as well as address related economic and community needs through equitable approaches. Spending priorities are as follows:

1. First, to support digital inclusion efforts to enable libraries to reach residents such as through internet hotspots, accessible Wi-Fi, and access to digital content and related resources, particularly in support of education, health, and workforce development needs. The following types of data, among others, can inform efforts to reach underserved populations:
  - Poverty/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Unemployment
  - Broadband availability;
2. Second, to provide rapid emergency relief to libraries across the country, allowing them to safely respond to the pandemic and implement public health protocols;
3. Third, 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
4. With respect to (1), (2), or (3), reach tribal and museum partners best positioned to assist with pandemic response efforts, in addition to traditionally eligible library entities, where appropriate.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted directly from IMLS Official Notice of Award.

## Timeline:

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| July 1, 2021                 | Application available   |
| August 5, 2021               | Application deadline – <b>5 p.m. Eastern</b>  |
| August 6-19, 2021            | Application review by DLIS  |
| August 19-September 23, 2021 | Application review by State Library Council   |
| September 24 and 28, 2021    | State Library Council funding recommendation virtual meeting (two days)   |
| Late September 2021          | Funding recommendations to Secretary of State for approval. Project start date is date of Secretary’s approval. |
| Early October 2021           | Grant agreements sent to grantees for review, approval and signature  |
| January 30, 2022             | Mid-Year Report due   |
| September 15, 2022           | Project payments complete   |
| September 30, 2022           | Project period ends   |
| November 1, 2022             | Annual Reports due  |

## **Match is not a requirement for DLIS Florida American Rescue Plan Act funding.**

**Number of applications that can be submitted:** There is no limit on the number of applications that can be submitted. Applications can be submitted directly by an eligible entity or by another eligible entity on behalf of another organization.

## **Eligibility**

Any Florida organization that meets the eligibility criteria described below can apply for DLIS Florida American Rescue Plan Act funding:

- The organization’s library services program must be headed and administered by a librarian who has completed a library education program accredited by the American Library Association.
- Nonprofit organizations must be qualified or registered pursuant to Chapter 617, *Florida Statutes* and be in good standing. Good standing indicates that the nonprofit organization has a current certificate of status from the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations.

## Eligible Organizations

The following entities are eligible to apply:

- Florida libraries and nonprofit organizations primarily related to the provision or support of library services are eligible to apply for DLIS Florida American Rescue Plan Act funds.
- Florida museums and cultural organizations are eligible to apply for DLIS Florida American Rescue Plan Act funds if they have a library that meets the definition of a special library as described below.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON ELIGIBILITY FOR SPECIFIC ORGANIZATION TYPES:

**Public libraries.** A public library is an organized collection of information resources with paid staff; regularly scheduled hours for being open to the public; is legally established; is supported in whole or in part with public funds; and makes its collections accessible to the public either directly or through the Florida Information Network (FLIN).

This category also includes state-supported institutions and Native American tribal libraries.

The headquarters of a library system or cooperative must submit the application. The project can be for the entire system, an individual branch or for some other portion of the organization, but only the headquarters can submit the application. For example: If the project will benefit one county in a multicounty cooperative, the director of the multicounty cooperative must submit the application on behalf of the county library.

**Public elementary, secondary or charter school libraries.** The county school board coordinates and applies for grants on behalf of public elementary, secondary and charter school libraries. Grants may be for a single member or multiple members of a school district. To be eligible to receive a grant, the district media coordinator or contact must meet the basic eligibility requirements (see Eligibility section above).

**Academic libraries.** Academic libraries include public state universities, state or community colleges and private post-secondary education libraries. The academic support organization for the public colleges and universities is also included in this category. To be eligible to receive a grant, the library must meet the basic eligibility requirements (see Eligibility section above).

**Library consortia.** Eligible library consortia in Florida are the five multitype library cooperatives: Northeast Florida Library Information Network, Panhandle Library Access Network, Southeast Florida Library Information Network, Southwest Florida Library Network and Tampa Bay Library Consortium. To be eligible to receive a grant, the library director must meet the basic eligibility requirements (see Eligibility section above).

**Special libraries.** Special libraries include information resource centers located at publicly supported government agencies, museums, hospitals, associations and other organizations with specialized information needs. At least fifty percent of the agency's operating funds must come from public governmental sources. To be eligible to receive a grant, the library must meet the basic eligibility requirements (see Eligibility section above).

***Other organizations serving libraries.*** An organization that strengthens and supports libraries, such as state professional library associations or local Friends groups, must be a not-for-profit corporation, qualified or registered pursuant to Chapter 617, *Florida Statutes* and in good standing (see Eligibility section above).

Unlike the other organizations listed above, the project manager must be a librarian who has completed a library education program accredited by the American Library Association. Projects coordinated by these organizations that are awarded DLIS Florida American Rescue Plan Act funds must be open to staff of any Florida library or allied organization and not limited to members of the organization.

## **Partner Application Submission**

An organization may submit an application and administer a project on behalf of another eligible organization. If this option is chosen, the expectations are:

- The partner (beneficiary) organization's name should be clearly included in the application title.
- Funds must be received, expended and administered by the applicant organization. Grant funds cannot be distributed to the partner organization for expenditure.
- A Partnership Form must be signed between the applicant and the partner organization (beneficiary). The form should indicate that the partner wants the applicant to apply for funding on their behalf and what the applicant will do for the partner. Signed forms should be included in the Certifications and Attachments section, in the Support Materials section. This form is available at [info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/arpa/forms/](https://info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/arpa/forms/).

## Use of Funds

Federal grants, such as the DLIS Florida American Rescue Plan Act grants, have limitations on what items and services may be purchased using grant funds. Some items and services are "allowable costs," meaning that they may be purchased using grant funds, while others are not.

Expenditures shall be in compliance with the state and federal guidelines for allowable project costs. State guidelines for allowable costs are outlined in the Department of Financial Services' *Reference Guide for State Expenditures*, which is available online at <https://www.myfloridacfo.com/division/aa/manuals/documents/ReferenceGuideforStateExpenditures.pdf>.

Federal guidelines for allowable costs can be found at [gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200-subpartE.pdf](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2014-title2-vol1/pdf/CFR-2014-title2-vol1-part200-subpartE.pdf) in 2 *CFR*, Part 200, Subpart E – Cost Principles.

In general:

Grant funds are designed for direct support of services and programs.

Grant funds may be used for evaluation related costs.

Grant funds may be used to assist in making technology and information resources available for persons with disabilities.

If grant or matching funds are used for travel expenses, they must be paid in accordance with the provisions of Section 112.061, *Florida Statutes*.

Grant funds may be used for indirect costs. There are four options for indirect costs in the application:

1. Use a current indirect cost rate already negotiated with a federal agency (2 *CFR* 2 §200.414(e));
2. Use an indirect cost rate proposed to a federal agency but not yet approved (2 *CFR* 2 §200.414(e));
3. Use a rate not to exceed 10% of the total direct costs if your organization has never had a federally negotiated indirect cost rate and you are not subject to other requirements (e.g., for local governments) (2 *CFR* 2 §200.414(f)); or
4. Do not include any indirect costs.

When determining the amount that can be charged to indirect costs, the modified total direct costs amount (MTDC) must be used as the amount of funds that the indirect costs are calculated against. The MTDC is the direct costs of the project minus certain exclusions that include equipment and space rental costs. A list of exclusions that cannot be a part of the MTDC are in 2 *CFR* §200.68.

Grant funds may not be used for:

1. Construction. Funds may not be used to build, remodel or expand library facilities. However, they may be used to retrofit a building to accommodate technologies (e.g., wiring).
2. Audits. If the grant recipient's governing entity has received less than \$750,000 in federal funds, grant funds may not be used to cover audit costs.
3. Food and Drink. Although food and drink may be served at a program paid for with grant funds, these items may not be purchased with grant funds.

## **Funding Decision Process**

The application funding decision process is accomplished in three phases:

### ***1. Grants Staff Review***

Upon receipt by the Division, applications will be reviewed by Grants staff for eligibility and completeness. If an application is incomplete, the applicant will be notified of the identified deficiencies and will be given an opportunity to submit information or documentation to render the application complete. If the identified deficiencies are not corrected by the established deadline, the application will be declared ineligible. When applications are declared ineligible, applicants will be notified of their ineligibility.

### ***2. Application Review Meeting***

The State Library Council serves as the review panel and makes funding recommendations on all grant applications submitted by eligible organizations. The application review will be held during a public meeting. The Division strongly encourages applicants to attend the grant panel meeting; however, it is not required. Meeting information will be emailed to applicants and posted on the Division's website.

Applications will be reviewed by the panel in two rounds:

#### **1. Scoring Round**

Individual panel members will review and score each application independently prior to the meeting, using the Panel Evaluation Form in the DOS Grants System. Initial panel member scores and comments must be entered into the DOS Grants System at [dosgrants.com](http://dosgrants.com) prior to the panel meeting.

Each application will be reviewed and discussed individually by the panel during the meeting. Applicants may also be given an opportunity to answer questions asked by panel members. Panel members will have an opportunity to modify and/or finalize their scores during the meeting. After discussion of each application, each panel member will voice their final score on the application and provide verbal comments about that score. The official score is the one voiced at the meeting.

Once the finalized scores are received from the panelists, each application score will then be averaged. The final average of the individual panelist's scores will be rounded to three decimal places.

Applications that score at or above 60 points will be considered by the panel for funding recommendations. Those applications that receive an average score equal to 59 or lower will not be considered further for funding.

Once the average scoring has been completed, Division staff will provide a list to the panel, ordered by score, for all applications scoring at or above 60 points.

## 2. Funding Round

The panel will make a recommendation of a funding amount for each application, with a grand total up to the amount of available funding.

- Funding recommendations can be from \$0 up to the full amount of the funding request.
- The panel can recommend revisions or changes to applications as a condition for funding.
- The panel cannot recommend more funding than is requested.
- The panel can determine the final funding recommendation for each application in various ways, such as fully funding from the highest scored application until all of the funds are allocated; percentage funding for all applications; or any other method chosen by the panel.

## 3. Secretary of State Review

The panel funding recommendations are submitted to the Secretary of State for final review and approval. The Secretary of State has the final authority to approve, amend or deny funding recommendations and to award grants.

Upon completion of the application review process, applicants are notified whether or not their application was approved for funding. Results of the evaluation of grant applications are available upon request after the review process is complete.

## Application

The following information shall be provided in the application. The application shall be submitted on the DOS Grants System at [dosgrants.com](http://dosgrants.com).

The Division will use the information provided by the applicant when developing the Scope of Work and Deliverables in the grant agreements of the approved projects.

**Applicant Information.** Provide general information related to the applicant and application, including:

- Organization information.
- Organization director's contact information.
- Project manager's contact information.
- DUNS number.

**Project Information.** Provide overall application information, including the project title, project summary, organizational purpose and organization governance.

If the application is being submitted on behalf of a partner organization, include the name of the beneficiary organization in the project title and information on the beneficiary in the project summary as applicable.

**Activities.** Describe the specific activities you will implement to help “communities respond directly and immediately to the pandemic, as well as to related economic and community needs through equitable approaches.” If the project will provide solutions to several different needs, describe each in a separate activity. Prioritize two or more activities. If there is only one activity, prioritize it as one of one.

For each activity include:

- The activity name.
- A description of who will benefit, including demographics and other specific information.
- The community need, problem or challenge this activity will address and how it was identified.
- A detailed narrative of what will be implemented as the solution to meet the need, problem or challenge.
- Who will plan, implement and manage this activity.
- How you will measure the results of the activity or know it is successful. Include what will be measured and how it will be counted.
- Describe how the activity will be sustained once the project is completed, if applicable.

Provide a detailed overall timeline of all the proposed activities. If desired, the timeline can be in the form of a Gantt or other chart. To find out more about a Gantt chart, visit <https://www.gantt.com/>

**Budget.** Provide details on the proposed expenditures of all funds. The budget explains and justifies the funds required for each activity (or activities). Each section of the budget is comprised of two required parts: the budget detail and budget narrative of the proposed amounts.

The narrative provides a detailed explanation and justification of proposed expenditures. For each amount listed in the detail, the narrative should describe how the amounts were calculated, for both grant and matching (if applicable) funds; i.e., include calculations, unit costs or breakdown of costs.

Matching funds are not required; however, they can be included if desired.

The applicant organization is allowed, if desired, to charge an indirect cost (administrative fee) for the project. For more information on indirect costs, please see the Use of Funds section.



**Certifications and Attachments.** If you have already applied for LSTA funds in 2021, you are not required to resubmit the following forms.

Provide the required certification forms, as applicable:

1. **Debarment Form.** All applicants must complete this form to certify that the organization has not been deemed ineligible to receive federal funding. The form is available at [info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms](http://info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms).
2. **Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA).** The form is available at [info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms](http://info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms). All applicants must complete this form. The FFATA Act requires that information on federal awards and executive compensation be made available to the public through a single searchable website, [www.USASpending.gov](http://www.USASpending.gov).
3. **Internet Safety Certification Form.** The form applies only to public libraries and is available at [info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms](http://info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms). This form certifies CIPA (Children’s Internet Protection Act) Compliance.
4. **Lobbying Activities Form.** Complete this form if your organization lobbies Congress for the passage of any federal act or law, or if your organization pays a lobbyist to lobby Congress. The form is available at [info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms](http://info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms).
5. **MLS Degree Certification.** Complete this form only if your organization **does not** receive a State Aid to Libraries Grant or a Library Cooperative Grant. The form is available at [info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms](http://info.florida.gov/services-for-libraries/grants/lsta/guidelines-applications-and-forms).
6. **Certificate of Status.** A current certificate of status from the Florida Department of State, Division of Corporations must be provided. This applies to not-for-profit organizations who do not receive Library Cooperative Grant funding and to organizations who have not submitted this form as part of an LSTA 2021 application.
7. **Electronic Payments.** A Vendor Direct Deposit form must be completed annually and submitted directly to the Department of Financial Services so that your organization can receive grant funds via electronic funds transfer (EFT). If your organization has already submitted a form to DFS since January 2021, please indicate. This form is available at <http://myfloridacfo.com/Division/AA/Forms/DFS-A1-26E.pdf>.
8. **Support Materials.** Add any attachments that are applicable to your application (optional).

## APPLICATION EVALUATION

Each application will be evaluated by individual State Library Council members for clarity, completeness and appropriateness as pertaining to the project impact, implementation, and budget categories. The point values will be determined using the scoring rubric below:

| <b>Panel Evaluation Form</b>  |                        |                        |  |
|---|------------------------|------------------------|--|
| <b>Overall Project Impact– maximum score 40 points</b>  |                        |                        |  |
| <b>Criteria</b>   | <b>Possible points</b> | <b>Reviewer points</b> | <b>Comments to support points assigned by Reviewer</b> |
| Describes the community need, problem or challenge for each proposed activity.                      | <b>10</b>              |                        |  |
| Describes how the community need, problem or challenge is identified.                               | <b>10</b>              |                        |  |
| Describes who will benefit from each activity and how they will benefit.                            | <b>10</b>              |                        |  |
| Describes an appropriate solution(s) to the community need, problem or challenge for each activity. | <b>10</b>              |                        |  |
| <b>Overall Project Implementation – maximum score 30 points</b>                                     |                        |                        |  |
| Describes a logical and appropriate implementation process for each activity.                       | <b>10</b>              |                        |  |
| Describes who will plan, implement and manage each activity.  | <b>5</b>               |                        |  |
| Describes how the results of each activity will be measured, including what will be counted.        | <b>5</b>               |                        |  |
| Describes how each activity will be sustained once the project is completed, as applicable.         | <b>5</b>               |                        |  |
| The proposed timeline is realistic, appropriate and addresses all project activities.               | <b>5</b>               |                        |  |
| <b>Overall Project Budget – maximum score 20 points</b>   |                        |                        |  |
| The budget is realistic and appropriate.  | <b>10</b>              |                        |  |
| Shows how all amounts were calculated.  | <b>10</b>              |                        |  |
| <b>Total points</b>   | <b>90</b>              |                        |  |