

STATE LIBRARY OF NORTH CAROLINA

ADAPTING TECHNOLOGY GRANT APPLICATION

<https://fs25.formsite.com/res/submitOrder>

Submission deadline: February 1, 2022

Library Information

Institution/Library: Rowan Public Library

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Project Manager: Amber Covington

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Library Director: Melissa J. Oleen

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Grant Information

Project Title: Provide Mobile and self service checkout options for library users

Total grant amount requested, in whole dollars.* \$38,000

1. Describe the technology supplies and equipment that you plan to purchase with the funds and how the technology will improve library operations in support of the grant program's purpose.

Rowan Public Library sees to improve the accessibility of its current checkout options. Replacing RPL's current self-service stations, which are over 7 years old and running on an operating system that is no longer supported by Windows, would provide customers an additional consistently available, contactless checkout option. The four self-service checkout stations would be implemented at all four RPL branches: Headquarters (Salisbury), East (Rockwell), South (China Grove), and West (Cleveland).

Acquiring this technology would advance the evolution of RPL's digital inclusion initiative. In particular, it would increase the accessibility of check out for those with disabilities, who are caretakers of others, and those in other situations that can prevent someone from visiting a checkout desk. More customers would be guaranteed the freedom to check out. Additionally, modern self-service stations increase protections that remain necessary due to the ongoing evolution of COVID-19 health and safety protocols for both staff and customers.

From the customer's perspective, limited service desk staffing leads to longer lines and wait times and more crowded spaces/person-to-person exposure. Under normal conditions, let alone during a pandemic, there are many factors that can deter a customer from visiting a check out desk and engaging in a face-to-face exchange. Those factors are magnified now, and many customers would rather not check out materials at all than take the risk of interacting with someone at a service desk. The requested self-service stations

would offer these customers a choice, ensuring they have access to checking out materials without increasing their risk of person-to-person exposure.

From the Operations side, while limited staffing due to isolations and quarantines is accepted as an unavoidable byproduct of vitally necessary protocols to protect staff and the public, it also presents new challenges almost daily. Currently, all RPL staff are cross-trained to work in other areas of the Library when needed because supervisors must often re-assign staff from different areas to keep service desks fully operational. For January and February 2022, an additional challenge has been avoiding assigning staff to different branches, in an effort to control staff-to-staff exposures as a response to Rowan County's rising COVID-19 numbers. These elements alone mean that supervisors are reworking schedules and job assignments to ensure coverage on an almost daily basis. Fully functional, up-to-date self-service kiosks would provide much-needed relief for service desk staff, allowing desk staff numbers to decrease without negatively impacting the number of customers served. Ensuring that customers have a contactless option decreases the number of face-to-face transactions, reduces wait times and length-of-lines, and lessens the likelihood of person-to-person exposure.

Rowan Public Library and its staff want to serve the community in beneficial ways. Contributing to the safety of the community and Library staff enables the continued access to and exchange of resources and materials. Reliable, modern self-service stations would allow a consistent option of checkout for customers while also supplementing limited service desk staffing. The requested stations will contribute significantly towards the inclusivity of each RPL branch and move each closer to the goal of digital equity.

2. Budget Table (in whole dollars; enter zero in blank cells)*

Supplies/Materials

Short Description: N/A

Estimated Amount: 0.00

Equipment (per item cost over \$5,000)

Short Description: Four (4) self-service checkout kiosks. One each for RPL Headquarters (Salisbury), RPL East (Rockwell), RPL South (China Grove), and RPL West (Cleveland). Estimated cost per kiosk is \$8,000 plus freight.

Estimated Amount: \$36,000

IDC (IDC is allowable out of the maximum funding, not in addition to the maximum funding)

Short Description: RPL-West will need minor electrical work done to prep its self-service checkout kiosks location.

Estimated Amount: \$2,000

Total: \$38,000

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