EZ Grant Application

State Library of North Carolina

Application Information

Project Name*

Provide a title that briefly describes your project. Avoid using acronyms.

Podcast Production Studio and Instructional Space

Character Limit: 50

Project Abstract*

Clearly and concisely summarize the project. Abstracts should be written for a public audience and will be published online. Avoid acronyms, abbreviations, individuals names, dollar amounts, lists, etc. *Character Limit: 800*

Rowan Public Library's community will benefit from the creation of a Podcast Production Studio and Instructional Space. A dedicated studio space outfitted with professional recording equipment will provide creative learning opportunities for RPL's patrons, including information programs and recording access. Local organizations and institutions will also be able to utilize the space, providing students, teachers, and others a platform for message delivery they might not otherwise have.

RPL staff have the expertise to facilitate this project to a successful end. Staff began producing the library's first podcast in late 2021; the quarterly *Gather Round Good People* focuses on regional folk music, and the seventh episode is now in production.

This grant award would provide the digital audio equipment and materials needed to acoustically re-condition the Headquarters branch's Makerspace to create the needed space.

Digitization Grant*

Is this a digitization grant? Additional questions are required for digitization grants and will be added to the application if "Yes" is selected.

Choices

Yes
No

Planning Grant*

Is this a strategic planning/needs assessment grant? Additional questions are required for planning grants and will be added to the application if "Yes" is selected.

Choices

Yes
No

User and Needs

Who are the library users?*

Who are the current or potential library users this project will benefit? Describe the community to be served using demographic statistics, library records, surveys, or other relevant data to support your statement

Character Limit: 7000

Rowan Public Library serves a population of 148,565 persons. In fiscal year 2022, the library had 94,006 registered users and logged 235,186 visits across four branches. The population of Rowan County grew by 7.3% between 2010 and 2022. The State of North Carolina expects the population of Rowan County to increase by 5.9% through 2030.

RPL strives to support a knowledgeable, diverse and economically vibrant Rowan. To these ends, RPL provides free access to materials and information in a variety of formats to support the interests, education, careers, passions and life pursuits of citizens of all ages and abilities; it also provides access to technologies necessary to participate in today's information sharing economy. Each of RPL's four branches has computer labs that include scanners, copiers, printers, and also offers converters, headphones, and select special equipment.

A Podcast Production Studio and Instructional Space will be an additional resource for a diverse audience of patrons, allowing them to gain the knowledge and experience to fully participate in the digital information conversation. Additionally, students and faculty from private, public, and home schools, as well as colleges and other institutions of higher learning, will be able to utilize the studio and equipment.

What is the need?*

State the need and describe how the need was determined. The statement of need includes a well-defined benefit or planned benefit to patrons demonstrating it is user-focused.

Character Limit: 7000

Podcasts have become a popular means of learning and knowledge sharing. The innately mobile nature of podcasts makes it easy for listeners to tune in, and the multitude of podcast-sharing platforms makes participating in this information market appealing to many content creators. However, in order to engage with podcasts as listener or creator, access to specific technologies are necessary.

The addition of a podcast production studio and instructional space will advance RPL's digital inclusion initiative, providing more users the opportunity to participate in and benefit from our growing information society. RPL staff regularly assist patrons with technology and communication needs; the addition of a podcast studio will provide yet another solution that can be offered to interested users. The professional recording equipment will also be mobile, providing many options for programming and outreach. Combined, the dedicated studio space and equipment will provide creative learning opportunities, including information programs and recording access. Local organizations and institutions will also be able to utilize the space and equipment, providing students, teachers, nonprofit agencies, and others a platform for message

delivery they might not otherwise have.

RPL staff have the expertise to facilitate this project to a successful end. The idea grew out of response to the library's first podcast, which was produced by staff in late 2021. The quarterly *Gather Round Good People* is dedicated to informing listeners about the stories behind featured folk songs with a local, regional, or state-wide connection, and its seventh episode is now in production. The positive feedback offered unsolicited by its listeners combined with the ubiquitous nature and importance of podcasts in our information-driven society led to this grant application. The LSTA grant award will ensure that members of the Rowan community have access to learning and practicing these necessary technology skills.

~~User and Needs - Planning Grant~~

~~Who are the library users?~~*

~~How will current and potential library users benefit from this planning project? Describe your current and potential library users and some of the long-term benefits you expect to see as a result of this project.~~

~~Character Limit: 7000~~

~~What is the need?~~*

~~Why is a planning project needed at this time for your current and potential library users? State the user-focused need and describe how the need was determined. The statement of need includes a well-defined benefit or planned benefit to patrons demonstrating it is user-focused. Describe why a consultant is needed to accomplish the planning. If a consultant was used in an LSTA-funded planning project in the past five years, describe why another is needed.~~

~~Character Limit: 7000~~

Project Description

What do you plan to do?*

What do you want to do to solve or address the need state in the Users and Needs section? Include target numbers for what will be better of different for library users. For example: How many classes do you plan to offer? How many participants are expected to attend? How many additional computer hours will available to library users?

Character Limit: 7000

The LSTA grant award will support RPL's digital inclusion initiative by enabling the transformation of the Headquarters branch's current Makerspace to also provide a dedicated, acoustic-friendly studio space featuring professional, yet user friendly, recording equipment. After an orientation by RPL staff, users will be able to take advantage of modern equipment in a soundproof environment. The space will be usable by individuals and small groups, including students from local colleges and schools. The Makerspace/Podcast Studio has a glass wall that faces a large seating area, providing a venue for special programs and presentations.

Because of the fully outfitted studio, RPL will be able to regularly offer programs that will teach

users about digital storytelling, audio production, editing, interviewing and other marketable skills. Programming around such themes as community storytelling, local history, writing, and performance would also be featured. A multitude of creative partnerships are expected, including hosting students/classes from local public, private, and home schools as well as local colleges; featuring presenters on special topics, particularly in the field of history; and collaborations with other local agencies to share useful and timely information with the community. Informational programs designed for teens and/or adults and presented by RPL staff will be offered at least four times a year with an expected audience of 12-20 participants.

The Podcast Studio will also provide individuals and groups with the opportunity to reserve the space for use. Trained RPL staff will provide an orientation before first use, and trained Information Desk staff will be available to assist as needed. It's anticipated that the studio will be available for public use and reservation at least 40 hours each week.

Additionally, the Podcast Studio will strengthen RPL's own informational offerings to the community by ensuring the continuation of its current podcast *Gather Round Good People* and allowing the creation of additional audio productions, such as a series dedicated to featuring select holdings from RPL's Edith M. Clark History Room.

Why this approach?*

Why was this solution selected? Why not something else? Include research you may have done to strengthen the rationale of this solution.

Character Limit: 5000

Like most public libraries, RPL's space is limited and valuable. Renovating the Makerspace to double as a podcast studio maximizes the room and makes good use of the nearby seating area. Including mobile recording equipment enables users to take their projects on the road, so to speak, and then return to the studio to edit their final pieces. In other cases, such as adult outreach, it allows librarians to take the equipment to the home-bound user, allowing them an opportunity to engage in information sharing and creation that they would otherwise be denied. Library staff seek to create a space that will be heavily used by individuals, groups, and local partners. Staff chose to pursue transforming the space into a podcast production studio due to the increasing popularity of the audio genre and the user-friendly equipment that can be purchased. Unlike some technologies, potential users can be easily and quickly trained to use the available equipment and produce quality content that will meet their needs.

What outcomes will come from a successful project?*

If this project is successful, what outcomes will result from this grant? **What is the goal?** Outcomes are changes in the user's behavior, attitudes, skills, knowledge, status, or life condition.

Character Limit: 5000

The Podcast Studio will provide novice users an entry point into learning about the world of podcasting and audio production from the ground up. For other users, the studio will hone their

skillsets. All users will gain digital storytelling skills, learn interviewing techniques, experience studio and/or field recording, and apply audio editing and mixing methods.

The dedicated studio and its equipment will generate informative and creative programming. Proposed topics include basic podcasting skills; an introduction to broadcast journalism, presented in partnership with local schools and colleges; personal history interviews with residents at senior care facilities; community storytelling; and explorations of key points in local history.

A successful Podcast Studio will foster civic connections and facilitate users' work with the technology. It will generate 4-6 programs each calendar year that serve the Rowan community well. It will serve as an engaging locus of creative energy and be utilized by individual users, students, teachers, and other local agencies.

How will expenditures support your goal?*

Provide a narrative that describes the costs for the project and how these costs will support the project's goal. Show how costs are reasonable and necessary for the success of the project. Use quantity and cost per item to demonstrate how costs are reasonable and necessary. You should explain how the costs associated with each line item or category of the budget relate to the implementation of the project.

Character Limit: 3500

Due to the popularity of podcast production, audio recorder manufacturers now create equipment with the podcaster in mind. Ideally, equipment for the Podcast Production Studio and Instruction Space will include the following:

Rode RODECaster Pro II 4-Person Podcasting Kit with PodMics, Broadcast Arms, and Headphones (1 bundled package budgeted)
The podcast specific Rodecaster Pro-II as a bundled package that includes four sets of condenser microphones, boom stands, and headphones represents a cost savings and is user-friendly.

Zoom H6 Four Track Portable Stereo Recorder Bundle with Custom Waterproof Case and 128GB Class 10 SanDisk SD (2 bundled packages budgeted)
The Zoom H6 can be purchased as a bundle that includes a waterproof case and a 128G micro-SD card. The micro-SD card will hold up to 500 hours of digital audio and the case will protect the device as it is transported to various locations. Two portable stereo recorders are budgeted to allow one for short-term circulation and one for on-site use. The Zoom H6 can also serve as an all-in-one production and postproduction editor if the studio-based recorder is in use by others.

IK Multimedia iLoud Powered Studio Speakers (1 set budgeted)
The IK Multimedia iLoud powered studio speakers are ideal for desktop sound mixing and represent a "middle path" solution. Because the studio space is not very large, it is not prudent to invest in a system more powerful than needed. The speakers get high marks for sound reproduction at a reasonable price. Quality speakers are essential for evaluating the work

generated and will help ensure the smallest of errors do not appear in any publicly released productions.

MacBook Pro M2 Max (1 laptop budgeted)
A laptop computer is used as a postproduction editing platform. It must be robust enough to manage the dual rigors of public use and a high level of digital input. Apple laptops are intuitive to use and have a reputation of reliability. A MacBook Pro M2 represents the newest technology available from Apple housed inside a strong metal case. For processing digital audio, it is recommended that the baseline memory needed start at 16G, and the Pro M2 has 32G. Another benefit to using an Apple product is that all Rowan County public school students are issued an iPad for use, so that audience will already be acquainted with the company's interface.

Gold Series Vocal Soundproof Booth with window (1 booth budgeted)
In the field of audio recording, having access to an acoustically quiet space is crucial for success. With a soundproof booth in place, the public will have use of a specialized creative environment typically only found in pay-by-the-hour recording studios. Users will note their productions sound comparable to professional recordings which will build confidence. The recording booth is large enough to seat two people in an interview situation, yet still allow for ample usable space within the room proper. Booths must be quietly ventilated, the proper size for the space, and actually be soundproof. The Gold Series booth is favored because it can be ordered in custom sizes with a 5' x 7' booth being ideal for the instructional space. The Gold Series also has an added ½" absorption material for greater sound control. An added benefit is that the shipping container can be reused if the booth needs to be transported to another location.

Acoustic Foam Panels for Studio Space (4 packs budgeted containing 48 sq ft of foam)
Sound Absorbing Curtains (3 curtains budgeted to cover large window)
The Makerspace that will house the Podcast Studio has high ceilings, concrete walls, and a large window. It also shares a wall with a conference room, which allows some sound seepage. The installation of acoustic tiles and sound dampening curtains will improve the room's usability and create a distraction-free zone for learning.

Paid SoundCloud account (1 account budgeted)
Currently, the library uses the free version of SoundCloud to host its podcast. In anticipation of a higher quantity of digital content creation that new programing will generate, an upgrade to a paid, professional level SoundCloud account is needed.

How will the library sustain this project?*
A successful project may set an expectation that the library will continue to offer the program/service after the funding period has ended. How will the library sustain the programs/services offered through this grant for library users? How will the library replace/update hardware or equipment purchased for this project when it ages out?
Character Limit: 3500

To inform the community about the Podcast Studio and its offerings, an intensive promotional campaign will be conducted using the library's website, social media outlets, and print flyers.

Additionally, librarians will make personal contact with various stakeholders and users such as public and private schools, local university and college department heads, and civic organizations.

Once the Podcast Studio is outfitted with its equipment and procedures for new user orientation and general usage (i.e. how to make a reservation, etc.) are defined, the project will be self-sustaining. Users will be able to utilize the equipment and/or space to produce their podcasts, and RPL programmers will be able utilize the same to offer quality, informational programs to the community at large.

The professional grade equipment proposed for purchase should last many years. If a need arises involving the repair or replace of equipment, requests to community partners and the Friends of Rowan Public Library would be put forward.

Who are your partners?

Provide the name any project partner(s), describe their contribution to the project, explain their roles and responsibilities in the project, and describe the benefit and potential impacts of the project to the partner.

Character Limit: 3500

The Friends of Rowan Public Library provides support for RPL's annual Summer Reading programming for all ages, RPL's Virtual Author Series, and more. They operate the Second Saturday Bookshop, and the sale proceeds go towards supporting RPL programs and events. The Friends of RPL will provide financial support and allow for advertisement of the Podcast Studio in their monthly newsletter. The Podcast Studio upholds the Friends of RPL's mission while also providing the organization an additional platform through which information about their work and the library programs that they support can be shared with the community (through podcasts, audio sound bites, etc.).

Catawba College is a private, liberal arts college with communications programs that include digital media production and digital cultures. It is also home to the Greg and Missie Alcorn Digital Learning Lab. Programs and events at the Podcast Studio will be promoted on Catawba College bulletin boards and to faculty; faculty and students will be invited to use the studio as well. The Podcast Studio will support equitable access to modern technologies and ensure the subsequent ability to produce creative products and actively participate in our information-sharing-driven society and the conversation at large.

Livingstone College is a private historically black college with programs that include business administration, computer information systems, and liberal arts degrees. It is also home to the Andrew Carnegie Library. Programs and events at the Podcast Studio will be promoted on Livingstone College bulletin boards and to faculty; faculty and students will be invited to use the studio as well. The Podcast Studio will support equitable access to modern technologies and ensure the subsequent ability to produce creative products and actively participate in our information-sharing-driven society and the conversation at large.

Project Description - Planning Grant

What do you plan to do?*

Describe the type of planning you wish to carry out and why the consultant was selected for this project.

Character Limit: 7000

How will you engage with stakeholders?*

Describe how the library proposes to involve the community in the planning efforts (e.g., current or potential library users, trustees, community residents, community leaders, local government officials, institution staff and administration, local IT staff).

Character Limit: 5000

What are the responsibilities of the consultant and staff?*

Describe the consultant's key responsibilities and describe library staff member's key responsibilities.

Character Limit: 3500

What outcomes will come from a successful project?*

If this project is successful, what outcome(s) will result from this grant? **What is the goal?** Outcomes are changes in the user's behavior, attitudes, skills, knowledge, status, or life condition.

Character Limit: 5000

How will the library implement this plan?*

A successful project will set an expectation that the library will implement the plan after the funding period has ended. How will the library implement the plan?

Character Limit: 3500

Who are your partners?

Provide the name any project partner(s), describe their contribution to the project, explain their roles and responsibilities in the project, and describe the benefit and potential impacts of the project to the partner.

Character Limit: 3500

Evaluation

What output data will you collect?*

Before and after data is important to accurately measure and report effectiveness. How will you document before and after "outputs".

Outputs are the **countable products** (the number of workshops taught, the number of objects scanned, or the number of website views)?

Character Limit: 3500

Countable products for this project will include
- The number of informational programs offered to the public each calendar year (minimum 4-6)
- The number of individuals and groups who reserve the Podcast Studio
- The number of local agencies and organizations, including schools, who reserve the Podcast Studio or partner with RPL to offer programming that utilizes the Studio's equipment
- The number of podcasts produced by RPL and the subsequent number of listens
- The number of podcasts produced by non-RPL individuals or groups and the subsequent number of listens

What outcomes will you collect?*

How will you determine whether the project reached or moved toward the project goals? After implementing the program or plan, how will you document the "outcomes".

Outcomes are the changes brought about, in part, because of the project in the user's **behavior, attitudes, skills, knowledge, status, or life condition**? Use of outcome-based evaluation is recommended.

Character Limit: 3500

Outcomes for this project will be documented through
- Self-assessments by public user trainees who wish to utilize the Podcast Studio and/or its equipment before and after their orientation is held
- Surveys completed by individuals and groups about their experience reserving and using the Podcast Studio
- Satisfaction surveys completed by attendees of RPL-offered informational programs that utilize the Podcast Studio and/or its equipment
- Self-assessments completed by attendees of RPL-offered technology skill-building programs that utilize the Podcast Studio and/or its equipment
- Surveys completed by listeners of RPL-offered informational podcasts
- Feedback gathered from teachers and faculty who utilize the Podcast Studio and/or its equipment in their classes/with their students

Timeline

Timeline*

Upload a completed timeline form. The timeline should have at least one entry for each month of the funding period and should be prepared in consultation with any partner(s). Include details such as planning meetings, training, testing, significant project targets and milestones, outreach to the potential audience(s), and evaluation activities. Be sure to allow for the local institutional approval process and grant program deadlines.

Save the completed timeline form as a pdf and upload.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

Budget

Budget Table*

Upload a completed budget form. Use the instructions to identify and describe all LSTA and matching expenditures. Reference the allowable expenditures and unallowable expenditures as needed.

Save the completed budget form as a pdf and upload.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

LSTA Amount Requested*

Enter the amount of total LSTA Funds requested for this project as shown under #9 of the uploaded budget.

Character Limit: 20

$13,464.85

Matching Funds Contribution*

Enter the amount of planned Matching Funds requested for this project as shown under #9 of the uploaded budget.

Character Limit: 20

$4,488.28

Select the % of matching funds required.*

Identify the % of matching funds required: 25%, OR 10% if this project has a partner that will contribute specific deliverables to the project in a new or expanded way. Required Matching Funds are calculated against the Total Project Cost (less IDC). To calculate the required match, select method #1 or #2:

1. Add all budgeted costs together to obtain a Total. To determine the required match, divide the Total by 4 for 25% match or divide by 10 for a 10% match
2. Add all budgeted costs together to obtain a Total. To determine the required match, multiply the Total by .25 for 25% match or multiply by .10 for a 10% match

Choices
10%
25%

Where are your matching funds coming from?*

Identify the source(s) of matching funds such as a partner, Friends group, foundation, local business, library budget, etc.

Choices

<mark>Library budget</mark>
Grant partner
<mark>Friends group</mark>
Foundation (including college foundations)
Local business
Other

Other Documentation

Letters of Support

Attach any letters of support as one file.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

See attached letters from the Friends of Rowan Public Library, Catawba College, and Livingstone College.

Digitization Grant - Additional Questions

Prior to applying for this grant, prospective applicants should have:

- Reviewed information about planning a Digital Project;

- Identified the materials that will form the basis of the digital project;

- Surveyed other existing digital collections to determine whether the materials are already freely available online;

- Reviewed the physical condition of materials to be digitized to be sure that they can be handled and digitized without causing significant harm to the originals;

- Ensured that materials are arranged and described with adequate access points;

- Ensured that the library has clear and undisputed ownership of the materials to be made available online;

- Reviewed the rights status of all materials to be digitized, to determine whether or not they are in copyright and, if in copyright, whether or not the library has permission to or is justified in sharing the items online; and

- Surveyed existing technological capacity and identified areas of need for project completion and sustainability.

Scope, Content, and Need*

Succinctly describe the materials, including quantity, that you propose to digitize and make available. How are materials to be included in the digital project currently arranged and described (finding aids, indices, catalog records, and/or inventories)? How are these materials important to the cultural heritage of North Carolina? If the materials have statewide significance, please describe.

Character Limit: 5000

Attach a two page sample of items arrangement and description*

File Size Limit: 2 MB

Rights and Permissions*

Describe the process the library, and/or any partners, have taken to determine the rights status of the materials to be included in the digital project, and the determinations made regarding the ability to digitize and share those items online. Be sure to mention any documentation obtained from rights holders, if applicable.

Character Limit: 2500

Digitization*

Describe the standards and best practices to be used for digitization. Digital Projects that include digitization of materials must, at a minimum, follow the standards and practices outlined in North Carolina's Digitization Guidelines.

Character Limit: 2500

Access*

What methods of digital access (cataloging, indexing, online mark-up, etc.) are you planning to use for your proposed project? Describe what kinds of metadata you will use and why. (At a *minimum*, this grant program requires 1) Dublin Core metadata at the collection level on the presentation web site and/or 2) MARC cataloging of library materials in a library online system with the appropriate linkage between the online version and the online catalog record via the MARC 856 field.)

Character Limit: 2500

Capacity and Sustainability*

1. List the staff who will participate in the project and describe their expertise in the following areas: cultural heritage collections, including general management as well as traditional methods of preservation and access; digitization; web presentation; information technology support; and grant management.
2. Describe the information technology infrastructure and institutional support available to host, deliver, and maintain the digital product.

Character Limit: 5000

Outsourcing

If you are planning to outsource any portion of your project, include the following:

1. State exactly what services the vendor will be providing and your rationale for selecting these services (including justification of cost effectiveness).
2. Describe your selection criteria and how you chose your selected vendor.
3. Note any prior experience you have had with this vendor and describe any trial or demonstration you undertook during your planning process.

Character Limit: 5000

Planning Grant - Additional Questions

Consultant's Budget*

Attach budget information from the proposed consultant that shows how the costs for services were calculated including, but not limited to, projected hours/days to be worked, fees, travel expenses, and other project related expenditures.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

Consultant's Resume*

Attach a brief resume (4 page maximum) that contains the consultant's/consultants firm name and address along with three references, with contact names, addresses, and telephone numbers, which demonstrates the consultant has experience in performing required activities.

File Size Limit: 2 MB

Certification

Authorizing Official Name*

Enter the name of your library's authorizing official. The authorizing official is the person who is allowed to accept federal grant funds on behalf of your organization is commonly, a county or city manager, board chair, or dean of sponsored programs.

Character Limit: 100

Aaron Church

Authorizing Official Email*

Enter the email address of your library's authorizing official.

Character Limit: 254

Aaron.Church@rowancountync.gov

Important

Complete the Signature Page via the online DocuSign Form.

This form must be completely signed by the Library Director and the Authorizing Official for your library. LSTA staff will automatically receive the signed copy of the Signature Page. If the signature page is not signed by both the Library Director and Authorizing Official by 11:59 pm on March 1, 2023 your application will be considered incomplete and won't be reviewed.

If you are having trouble receiving DocuSign emails, look at these solutions.

If you are not able to complete the Signature Page via DocuSign, please email lsta@ncdcr.gov for an alternate solution.