

# LSTA Policy Manual

## I. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENTS

(a) A public library or public library system may apply for a grant provided that it shall be legally established and eligible for state aid.

(b) A cooperative library network may apply for a grant provided that all of its public library and/or public library system members shall be legally established and eligible for state aid.

(c) To be eligible to apply for a competitive grant and to receive a grant award, each applying library, library system, or cooperative library network must send a project administrator, library director, trustee or other qualified representative to a grant training workshop conducted by APLS staff if the applicant has not attended a workshop during the previous three grant cycles or if the grant program has been modified. The training workshop shall consist of two components: (1) training on how to apply for a grant and (2) training on how to administer a grant project. Consistent attendance at a workshop is strongly recommended.

(d) LSTA funds may **not** be used to replace locally supported programs or personnel.

(e) LSTA funds may be used to upgrade equipment already owned or leased by an applicant.

(f) Projects should be related to the future capability of the local libraries to support the continuation of programs established with Federal assistance funds. Project approval may be dependent upon local ability and willingness to support the project, at least in part.

(g) The following personnel information must be included with applications for competitive grants: For each employee who will be working on the project, a summary job description of the work to be done on the project by the employee and the employee's personal qualifications (education, experience, and expertise) as they relate to performing the duties needed to carry out the project. The job description and personal qualifications must be consolidated into one concise paragraph.

(h) Project applications shall include letters of support from all cooperating agencies, organizations, and any libraries to be served by the project. Up to five representative letters of support from members of the community may be included.

(i) Federal funds shall not be used for salaries or fringe benefits except as specifically permitted by the APLS Executive Board.

(j) If a project administrator leaves his or her position during the grant year, a new project administrator must be appointed. If a new project administrator is not appointed, funds will be withheld until one is named.

(k) The project administrator must be a salaried employee of the library or the salaried director of the system where the library is a member.

(l) For all non-vehicle grants, up to 25% of the required local match may come from project personnel salaries. For Vehicle grants, 100% of the required local matching funds must be in cash. Required local matching cash must be available and verified in writing by the time an APLS contract is signed.

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(m) All project funds must be spent as stated on the application budget (all items specified in the application narrative must be included in the budget). A grantee may amend the budget up to 5% of the total without prior approval from APLS provided the amendments are for items that are eligible and help achieve the original purpose of the project. Grantees must submit a written request to APLS in advance for budget changes exceeding 5% of the total. These requests must be approved by the APLS Director. Budget amendments may not increase the total amount of the LSTA award. All required local matching cash must be spent for the same purposes for which federal funds may be spent except as permitted elsewhere in these rules.

(n) Where feasible, there should be an advisory group composed of client members and community agencies and organizations to give regular feedback on the project and assist in modifying project methodology as necessary.

(o) Only if specifically allowable within the stipulations of a program, books and materials in any appropriate format may be purchased within a service program to benefit patrons.

(p) Evaluation of competitive grant projects shall reflect the impact of the project on the community and must also include an inventory of equipment or items purchased. In addition, the evaluation must include the measurement of progress toward meeting goals and objectives, anecdotal information showing the impact on individual lives, and (if appropriate) circulation or use statistics.

(q) Competitive grant applications shall be submitted in the manner specified in the application instructions.

(r) Any competitive grant application received with incomplete documentation will be ineligible for funding.

(s) For the state agencies only, the word “local” shall be interpreted as “state” as used in these rules.

(t) The legal service area of a public library or of a public library system, as used in these rules, is defined as the area within the boundaries of the government or governments which established the library or system. For the purpose of submitting a notice of intent and application for a competitive grant, the population of a legal service area is the one used for current State Aid appropriation.

(u) Grantees shall follow all federal laws, state laws, and APLS regulations and requirements. An authorized official of a grantee shall sign 1) a civil rights certificate; 2) a standard assurances document assuring that the grantee will comply with certain federal laws and with the regulations, policies, guidelines, and requirements imposed by the federal sponsoring agency and APLS; 3) a debarment and suspension certification; and 4) an Internet safety certification. Any and all of the APLS rules and requirements may be waived by a majority vote of the APLS Executive Board.

(v) Information about the qualifications of contractors must be provided to APLS as specified in grant applications or as required by APLS.

(w) Programs presented by contractors must be for an educational or cultural purpose. The subject matter of the programs must relate directly to the library's collection, and the programs must specifically promote use of the library's collection by program participants. LSTA funds may not be used for contractors who are clowns,

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jugglers, magicians, or musicians; however, required local matching funds or other local funds may be used for these types of contractors.

(x) Where funds are not available to fund all eligible competitive applications received by the date due, the following rules shall apply:

1. No applicant shall be awarded more than one grant. In case two or more applications from one applicant receive scores high enough for funding, the applicant will decide the priority.
2. If each eligible applicant receives funding for one application, and, if additional funds become available, then these funds may be used to fund one or more additional applications in a manner to be determined by the APLS Executive Board.
3. Applications submitted by a public library system on behalf of its members shall be considered as applications from each member and not from the system.

## II. FISCAL POLICY STATEMENTS

- (a) LSTA shall be financed by a combination of local and grant resources.
- (b) Grantees shall maintain all grant financial records and documents in a manner and for the length of time specified by the APLS Director and by governing state and federal laws and regulations. Periodic documented on-site inspections of targeted projects may be performed by APLS staff.
- (c) Grantees shall submit acceptable interim and final narrative and financial reports which shall show activities done to accomplish objectives. Whether reports are acceptable shall be determined by APLS staff. Grantees shall submit other reports as required by the APLS grants coordinator. Final narrative and financial reports for competitive grant projects shall be delivered in the manner specified in the report instructions. If any such grantee's report is late, the grantee may be considered a "high-risk" grantee and may be subject to the conditions specified in section 520-2-1-.01(3)(g) Special conditions for "high-risk" grantees, pages 6 and 7, and in section 520-2-1-.01(3)(h) Remedies for noncompliance, page 7. **The conditions may include restrictions on future grant funding.**
- (d) If LSTA grant totals are reduced by the APLS Executive Board, a grantee may also proportionately reduce any required local match.
- (e) For any project which involves the purchase of equipment or software for an amount per unit of \$5,000 or more, the applicant must submit technical specifications and a justification for use with the project application for review by APLS staff. A contract will not be awarded until APLS has received approval from IMLS as required by federal regulations. Other specifications and justifications for use must be submitted when required by APLS staff.
- (f) If, after an award contract has been issued, the grantee wishes to purchase equipment or software with a cost per unit of \$5,000 or more that was not listed in the application in accordance with paragraph (f) above and not approved by IMLS, the grantee must submit the cost, technical specifications, and a justification for use for review by APLS staff. The equipment or software shall not be purchased until APLS has received approval from IMLS as required by federal regulations.

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(g) If a project is funded, a request for bid must be issued by the grantee for a purchase or contract, where required by the state bid law. However, if equipment is available on a state bid list, the purchase may be made from that list where allowed by state law. If the amount to be bid is equal to or greater than the amount stated in the bid law, bidders must submit a bid bond in accordance with the law.

(h) Where allowed in a grant program, travel expenses may be paid up to the maximum allowed by the State of Alabama for state employees. However, no LSTA funds or required local matching funds may be used to pay for any travel expenses of persons who are not library staff, library trustees, contractors, or persons specifically authorized by the APLS Director.

(i) APLS reserves the right to: 1) determine the maximum amount to be used to fund one or more grant categories or grant awards; 2) reduce the funding for one or more grant categories or grant awards; and 3) not fund one or more grant categories or grant awards.

(j) LSTA funds and required local matching funds shall be obligated and expended only during the period from the effective starting date of the contract between APLS and the grantee to a final date stated in the contract or to an extended date as approved by APLS. LSTA funds may be requested from APLS only after services have been rendered or items have been acquired (unless exceptions are specifically permitted in a grant program) and local funds have been spent.

1. LSTA funds may also be requested to pay vendors for unpaid invoices for services that have been rendered or for items that have been acquired; however, payments to vendors for these unpaid invoices using LSTA funds shall be made within three (3) business days after receipt of LSTA funds from APLS. If not all LSTA funds are needed to complete the project, the amount of the required local matching funds shall be adjusted to equal 25% of the actual total of LSTA funds requested.

## **III. EVALUATION OF COMPETITIVE GRANT PROPOSALS**

(1) Assessment Process. The proposals are reviewed and evaluated by the LSTA Advisory Council based on established criteria. Their recommendations are sent to the APLS Executive Board, which makes the final decision concerning awards, based on funds available. Should further funds become available, the Advisory Council may recommend that additional projects be funded in rank order according to their review scores. The Advisory Council may recommend a cut-off score below which a grant proposal will not be recommended for funding regardless of the availability of funds. The APLS Executive Board reserves the right to: 1) make awards that do not follow the recommendations of the Advisory Council; 2) make no awards to one or more of the grant applicants; and 3) make awards for less than the application amounts.

(2) The LSTA Advisory Council shall have the power to establish one or more application evaluation committees, each of which shall be assigned to review and score a set of applications for one or more grant programs. Within each set of applications assigned to each committee, applications will be ranked and recommended by total score except in the case provided for in General Policy Statement (520-2-1-.01(4)(y)). The maximum score is 150 points. The APLS Executive Board will determine amount of funds that will be made available to fund each of the above sets of applications.

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## (3) Overall Criteria for Assessing Proposal Merit.

(a) To be awarded a grant, a project must demonstrate relevance to the current *Alabama Public Library Service Library Services and Technology Act Five Year Plan* and must conform to one or more of the following criteria:

1. Be planned for integration into the permanent service program.
2. Produce results which shall be communicated to the library community.
3. Meet one-time needs of major importance to the library community.
4. Be a demonstration program with statewide results or implication.

(b) The criteria listed below determine a project's authorization and eligibility and must be met before an application can be considered further.

1. Is the project authorized by federal and state laws and regulations?
2. Does the project relate to the library's five-year plan?
3. Has the project been approved by the library's governing body?
4. Does the project relate to the APLS five-year plan?

IF THE ANSWER TO ANY OF THE ABOVE QUESTIONS IS "NO," THE PROJECT WILL EITHER BE UNAUTHORIZED OR INELIGIBLE AND THE APPLICATION WILL NOT BE FORWARDED TO THE LSTA ADVISORY COUNCIL. MINOR CORRECTIONS MAY BE MADE TO APPLICATIONS AFTER THE DUE DATE.

## (4) Specific Evaluation Criteria for Small Library Development Grants and General Competitive Grants

(a) Once authorization and eligibility have been determined, applications are reviewed for the following criteria. For each criterion, applications are rated on a poor to excellent scale of 0 to 5. Further, each criterion has a weight, which is multiplied by the rating. The total review score can range from 0 to 150 points.

1. **Project description and target population** (20 points)  
Does the project description include all of the required information?  
0 1 2 3 4 5 x 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Basic need** (20 points)  
Is the need for the project clearly established and will the proposed services satisfy the need of the target population?  
0 1 2 3 4 5 x 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Outcome(s)** (15 points)  
Does each outcome clearly explain a change expected to occur in the target population, such as a change in their skills, attitudes, knowledge, behaviors, or life condition? Is each outcome directly related to the need?  
0 1 2 3 4 5 x 3 = \_\_\_\_\_

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4. **Activities and planning** (20 points)

Are the activities clearly identified, achievable, and measurable? Does the description of each activity include needed resources? Has sufficient planning gone into the application?

0 1 2 3 4 5 x 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

5. **Resources** (15 points)

Are the project personnel qualified to meet the needs and activities of the project? Are the proposed equipment, supplies, materials, and/or contractual services appropriate to meet the needs and activities of the project?

0 1 2 3 4 5 x 3 = \_\_\_\_\_

6. **Evaluation and continuation** (15 points)

Does the application explain how the project will be evaluated? Are there adequate provisions for continued services? If the project will not be continued, is there an explanation?

0 1 2 3 4 5 x 3 = \_\_\_\_\_

7. **Budget** (20 points)

Are the financial resources described adequate and appropriate? Are the items or services to be acquired stated clearly and with enough detail to be understood?

0 1 2 3 4 5 x 4 = \_\_\_\_\_

8. **Comparative need within a grant category** (15 points)

How great is the need for the project compared to all other applications within its grant category?

0 1 2 3 4 5 x 3 = \_\_\_\_\_

9. **Overall application evaluation** (10 points)

Is the project clearly within the intent of federal and state regulations for use of LSTA funds? Does the application present a clear and convincing case for funding of the project?

0 1 2 3 4 5 x 2 = \_\_\_\_\_

10. **Total review score** (max. score 150 points) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) **Scoring.** The LSTA Advisory Council will compile their recommendations to the Executive Board as follows:

1. Unauthorized or ineligible proposals will not be scored or recommended for funding.

2. Proposals will be ranked and recommended by total score. The maximum score is 150 points.

**Author:** Nancy C. Pack, Director

**Statutory Authority:** Code of Ala. 1975, §§41-8-(1-10). Title 20, U.S. Code, §§9121-9163, Museum and Library Services Act of 1996.

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## APPENDIX A

### **BYLAWS OF THE STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON LIBRARIES**

(1) ESTABLISHMENT AND PURPOSE.

- (a) The State Advisory Council on Libraries, hereinafter referred to as the LSTA Advisory Council, is created under the authority of the *Code of Alabama*, 1975, Section 41-8 (1-8) and Title 20, *U. S. Code*, Section 9151.
- (b) The functions and responsibilities of the LSTA Advisory Council shall be the following:
1. Advise APLS on the development of the State plan, including the preparation of long-range and annual programs;
  2. Advise APLS on policy matters arising in the administration of the State plan submitted under the Act and the regulations in this part; and
  3. Assist APLS in evaluating library programs, services, and activities under the State plan.

(2) MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENTS.

(a) The membership of the LSTA Advisory Council, appointed by the APLS Executive Board, shall include 16 persons who are legal residents of the state and who are geographically representative of each of the seven inhouse APLS consultant districts including one standing member from the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind Resource Library in Talladega and one standing member from the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies in Tuscaloosa. All other members will be public library directors or public library users when possible representing appropriate regions.

(b) In these bylaws "year" is defined as the federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30). The term of each position on the LSTA Advisory Council shall be three years. Appointments by region shall begin on October 1, 2008.

(c) Appointments to the LSTA Advisory Council are made annually by the APLS Executive Board or at other times when a position is vacant. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve for the remainder of the term for which the predecessor of the member was appointed. The date of the appointment to a vacant position shall not change the expiration date of the term of the position, and terms shall remain staggered as initially established. Appointments are made from a slate of nominees which is compiled in the following manner:

1. Annual notice in newsletters, on listservs, and on the APLS website inviting interested persons to submit nominations.
2. Annual letters to presidents of Alabama library organizations inviting nominations.

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(d) Nominees to the LSTA Advisory Council will be presented to the Executive Board according to the eight aforementioned geographic regions.

(e) A member of the LSTA Advisory Council, having completed one full or partial term, will be eligible for one consecutive reappointment. A council member who has served two consecutive terms is eligible for reappointment after a period of three years.

(f) Membership shall be automatically terminated for any member who does not attend two (2) regularly scheduled meetings in one federal fiscal year.

## (3) OFFICERS.

(a) The officers of the LSTA Advisory Council shall be the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Secretary. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be elected by the LSTA Advisory Council from its membership upon the adoption of these bylaws and each fiscal (October-September) year thereafter.

(b) The Chairman and Vice-Chairman shall be elected for a term of one year and may be re-elected for not more than one consecutive year.

(c) The Secretary shall be the APLS Director. If the APLS Director cannot attend a council meeting, a designee will be appointed by the Director.

(d) The LSTA Advisory Council shall fill vacancies for the balance of the term of the vacant office by election from its membership.

## (4) DUTIES OF THE OFFICERS.

(a) The duties of the Chairman shall be to call and preside at all meetings, appoint committees and carry out the duties generally pertaining to this office.

(b) The Secretary shall keep and distribute the minutes of the meetings of the Council and carry out the duties generally pertaining to this office.

## (5) COMMITTEES.

(a) The Executive Committee shall consist of the officers and two other members appointed by the Chairman. The duties shall be to act in an advisory capacity to the Chairman, to decide matters of immediate importance between meetings of the LSTA Advisory Council and to concern itself with matters to be brought before the LSTA Advisory Council for discussion and recommendation to the APLS Director.

(b) There are the following additional standing committees: 1) Bylaws Committee, 2) Education Committee, 3) Nominating Committee, and 4) Rules Committee.

(c) The LSTA Advisory Council may from time to time create such other committees as it may deem necessary to the proper functioning of the LSTA Advisory Council.

## (6) MEETINGS.

(a) Regular meetings shall be held quarterly at such location and date as agreed upon by the Chairman and Secretary.



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(b) One of the regular meetings shall be designated by the Chairman and Secretary as the LSTA Annual Review Meeting. This meeting shall be a mandatory meeting for all LSTA Advisory Council members. Grant application scores from members not attending this meeting shall not be valid.

(c) Special meetings may be called by the Chairman, or upon the written request of five members to the Secretary and the Chairman, or upon request of the Secretary to the Chairman.

(d) The Secretary shall give timely notice thereof.

(7) CONFLICT OF INTEREST. At meetings, a member may neither participate in discussions of nor vote on individual LSTA grant applications from a library with which the member is directly associated. If a member is directly associated with a library which belongs to a public library system or cooperative network, then the member may neither participate in discussions of nor vote on LSTA grant applications from the headquarters of that system or network. If a member is directly associated with a library which belongs to a public library system, then the member may neither participate in discussions of, nor vote on, LSTA grant applications from other libraries belonging to the same system. Direct associations with a library include, but are not limited to, (1) holding positions for the library as a trustee, employee, or grant administrator and (2) residing in the legal service area of the public library.

(8) QUORUM. A quorum shall consist of a majority of those members currently serving.

(9) VOTING. Members must be physically present to vote. Proxy votes shall not be accepted.

(10) PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY. Robert's Rules of Order, latest edition, shall constitute the authority on all matters not covered by these bylaws.

(11) AMENDMENTS. These bylaws may be amended at any regular or special meeting by a sixty (60) percent majority vote of the members present if written notice has been given not less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting. Amendments to these bylaws must be adopted by both the LSTA Advisory Council and the APLS Executive Board.

(12) EFFECTIVE DATE. These bylaws shall be effective after the date of their adoption by the LSTA Advisory Council and the APLS Executive Board.

**Author:** Nancy C. Pack, Director

**Statutory Authority:** Code of Ala. 1975, §§41-8-(1-10). Title 20, U.S. Code, §§9121-9163, Museum and Library Services Act of 1996.