LSTA Application Process

1. The State Library Director determines if funds will be made available in the upcoming LSTA two-year appropriation cycle for local sub-grant programs.

2. SCSL forms, guidelines, and related web pages are revised to reflect the new cycle dates and any other changes in policy or procedures, agency priorities, or availability of funds.

3. Announcement of the available subgrant programs is made via email to Library Directors and library staff as appropriate to each program.

4. New guidelines and application forms are created and distributed via email and are made available on the State Library’s website.

5. Libraries applying for grants gather all required documents and complete the application, submitting within the time frame indicated. When a deadline is specified, applications received after that date may not be considered.

6. New for all grants from FFY2015 onwards: Applicants can assign indirect costs to their grant application. An indirect cost is an organization's incurred cost that cannot be readily isolated or identified with just one project or activity. These types of costs are often referred to as “overhead costs” or “F&A costs.” Typical examples are charges for utilities, general insurance, use of office space and equipment that you own, local telephone service, and the salaries of the management and administrative personnel of the organization. Applicants may choose one of three options. Option (a) is generally recommended for easier grant administration, but the OMB regulations allow the applicant to claim indirect costs.
   a. Do not include any indirect costs as part of the LSTA grant budget. (Put $0 in the budget for this line item.) These may be included as part of your in-kind match if you have a rate and documentation for it. (See “Documenting Your Match”.)
   b. Use a current indirect cost rate that has been negotiated with a federal agency. Include a copy of the current negotiated agreement as an attachment. Documentation of expenses related to indirect costs is required for reimbursement.
   c. If you have no federal rate but would like to include these costs as a budget line item, you may select a 10% de minimus rate (up to 10% of the direct costs for the grant). Documentation of expenses related to indirect costs is required for reimbursement.

7. Applicants generally should email signed PDF scans of the applications to the LSTA Coordinator. Mailed applications will be accepted.
   a. The LSTA Coordinator will confirm receipt of the application within a week.
   b. If you are not notified of receipt of the application within a week, notify the LSTA Coordinator immediately. The application may have been lost in transit.
   c. If there are any problems in getting signatures for the application, contact the LSTA Coordinator. Some applications may be accepted without the signatures if they are pre-approved. Signatures would be needed by the time of award, however.

8. In general, applicants are encouraged not to wait until right before the deadline to submit their applications. If there are any major submission problems that an applicant foresees that will cause a grant application to be late, contact the LSTA Coordinator to see if an extension is possible. Extensions are not generally granted very close to the application due date out of fairness to other applicants except in some cases of illness or injury.
9. Applications are received by the State Library and are evaluated according to criteria for the particular program.
   a. For non-competitive (first-come, first-served) grants, the LSTA Coordinator will review and determine the acceptance of the application for an award. Occasionally s/he will consult with other SCSL staff members or s/he may request further information/clarification from the applicant.
   b. For competitive grants, a committee will review all applications. The committee generally consists of SCSL staff members but others may be called in to review. The committee will be provided with a scoring rubric for quantitative evaluation. The committee will also meet to discuss qualitative evaluation of the applications and to negotiate who to fund and for how much.
      i. Reviewers will adhere to a conflict of interest policy that ensures that no applicant will receive preferential treatment for funding outside of the merits of their application and proposed project.

10. Grants awards are subject to funding availability. Some applicants may not receive any award because of such factors as a large number of applicants, a limited amount of funds for the grant project, the quality of their grant application in relation to others received, etc. Some applicants may be awarded a reduced amount, which may require a retooling of the project budget, activities, and outcomes.
   a. In the case of Large Competitive grants, the LSTA Coordinator may seek additional information or an amended application and budget before an award is made. The LSTA Coordinator is the liaison between the applicant and the grant review committee, and the committee may have conditions for funding which will be communicated by the LSTA Coordinator. A reduced award will require an amended budget and amended grant plan before the final award is made.
   b. In general, all applicants should consider a contingency plan with a smaller budget in case reduced funding is offered.

11. In order to be considered eligible recipients of LSTA funds, public library systems must be in compliance with statutory requirements and LSTA requirements.

12. The application and financial administration processes are somewhat simplified for smaller grant programs. Applicants must read announcements and instructions for each grant program carefully.

13. All applicants will be notified (generally via email from the LSTA Coordinator) whether or not they received an LSTA award. Awardees will be sent an award packet soon thereafter, pending approval from the SCSL Director. (See “Grant Award and Administration Procedures”.)
   a. For those who were not awarded a grant, the LSTA Coordinator may be able to provide feedback based on the grant committee’s discussion and score sheets.
   b. If there are any formal complaints or request for appeals about the grant application and selection process, please contact the SCSL Director. (See “Comment/Complaint Procedures” and “Grant Award and Administrative Procedures”.) Otherwise, the LSTA Coordinator will receive any other feedback about the grant application if applicable.