

PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION GRANTS

The Public Library Construction grant program provides state funding to governments for the construction of public libraries. This includes the construction of new buildings and the acquisition, expansion or remodeling of existing buildings to be used for public library service. The maximum grant is \$500,000 and the minimum grant is \$10,000. The minimum allowable project size is 3,000 square feet. Funds are reimbursed to local government entities based on stages of project completion.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM FUNDED?

The Florida Legislature determines the amount appropriated annually for the program. In fiscal year 2005-2006, \$7,500,000 was appropriated for 15 projects; in fiscal year 2006-2007, \$7,153,000 was appropriated for 15 projects; and in fiscal year 2007-2008, \$5,000,000 was appropriated for 10 projects. **No funds have been appropriated since.**

HOW IS THE PROGRAM ADMINISTERED?

The Public Library Construction grant program is administered by the Florida Department of State, Division of Library and Information Services, Office of Community Development. The program is authorized under Section 257.191, *Florida Statutes*. Rules for administration of the program are outlined in Section 1B-2.011, *Florida Administrative Code*, and in the *Public Library Construction Grants Guidelines and Application*.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Any eligible Florida governmental entity may apply for a Public Library Construction grant. This includes county governments, incorporated municipalities, special districts and special tax districts that establish or maintain a public library and provide free public library service.

HOW DOES THE APPLICATION PROCESS WORK?

Announcements about application availability are made through the *Florida Administrative Weekly*, and through announcements sent to libraries. Application forms may be requested from the Grants Office, or they may be obtained from the Division's Web site:

<http://info.florida.gov/bld/grants/Construction/Construction.html>

Completed applications are due to the Division by April 1.

Applications are evaluated and ranked by Division staff using criteria outlined in the *Public Library Construction Guidelines and Application*. A 30-day correction period is provided for applicants to complete their application or to correct deficiencies after staff

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have reviewed all applications. Eligible applications are included in the Division's Legislative Budget Request, which is submitted to the Secretary of State. Grant recipients are notified of their award in July, 15 months after submission of their application.

ARE THERE MATCHING REQUIREMENTS?

A dollar-for-dollar match is required for all construction grants. This means that if an applicant is awarded a grant of \$500,000, the grantee must have a local match of at least \$500,000. The matching funds must be available and unencumbered at the time of the grant award.

A library in a county or community with a rural status may request a waiver of the match requirement at the time of the grant application in compliance with Section 288.06561, *Florida Statutes*.

Eligible matching funds include cash, governmental appropriation, negotiable and non-negotiable securities, bonds sold or validated, funds used for advance plans, estimates, or the cost of the land for the construction or acquisition of a building not already in use as a public library. For new construction, the current appraised fair market value of a currently owned site may be included as a part of the local matching portion. When planning remodeling and expansion projects, the current appraised fair market value of the site, building, or portion of a building not being used as a public library may be included toward the local matching portion. The appraisal shall be prepared by an independent licensed appraiser.

All funds, including local matching and donated funds, must be administered by the grantee.

HOW MAY I USE PUBLIC LIBRARY CONSTRUCTION GRANT FUNDS?

Payments are made to grant recipients on a reimbursement basis (30 percent, 30 percent, 30 percent and 10 percent) for costs incurred during construction.

Funds provided under a Public Library Construction grant may be used to cover costs of any of the items indicated below, as long as the construction project results in a completed library facility.

Eligible uses of grant funds include architectural services; acquisition of land; new construction; expansion; remodeling; site preparation, including the provision of parking spaces; engineering costs and legal fees directly related to the construction of the library; and initial or fixed equipment, including shelving, tables, chairs, information and building technologies, video and telecommunications equipment, machinery, utilities, built-in equipment and enclosures or structures necessary to house them, opening day collections, and all other items necessary to furnish and operate a new or improved facility for the provision of library services.

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WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

Grant payments are requested on a Public Library Construction Payment Request form. Each payment request requires the submission of specified documents related to the project. At the end of the project, a Project Closeout Report must be submitted that details project expenditures and results of the project. An audit must be carried out in accordance with Section 215.97, *Florida Statutes*, and submitted along with the fourth payment request before the project can be closed out.

I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS AND NEED TO KNOW MORE.

Contact the Office of Community Development's Grants Office.

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Fax: 850.245.6643
Email: grantsoffice@dos.state.fl.us
Address: Grants Office
Division of Library and Information Services
R.A. Gray Building
500 S. Bronough Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250