

STATE AID TO LIBRARIES GRANTS

The State Aid to Libraries grant program is comprised of three interrelated grants: Equalization, Multicounty, and Operating grants.

Equalization grants are available to counties that qualify for Operating grants and serve counties with limited local tax resources. For a county to qualify, a county's adjusted taxable property value must rank in the lower 34 counties in the state; and the millage rate must be greater than or equal to the statewide average, or the county's per capita income must be less than or equal to the statewide average. The grant provides a match of either \$0.25 or \$0.50 on the adjusted dollar of local expenditures.

The amount of funding available for Equalization grants is limited until the overall State Aid appropriation increases from the fiscal year 2006-2007 level. The total amount of funds available for Equalization grants is limited to 15 percent of the overall State Aid appropriation or the fiscal year 2006-2007 level. No county is eligible to receive an Equalization grant that is more than 10 percent of the amount available for Equalization grants. Counties that do not qualify for Equalization grants are phased out of the program over three years, with funding reduced by one-third per year. Once a county is phased out, it cannot regain eligibility.

Multicounty grants are available to the administrative unit of the multicounty library that qualifies for Operating grants. The grant has two components: 1) a base grant and 2) a match on local expenditures up to \$1 million, based on the number of counties in the multicounty library system. At least one county in the multicounty library must qualify for an Equalization grant.

Operating Grants are available to any county or municipality that qualifies for the State Aid to Libraries grant program. These grants provide a match of up to \$0.25 on local funds expended centrally by the library during the second preceding fiscal year. The grant amount is prorated if the legislative appropriation does not fully fund all components of the grant program.

HOW IS THE PROGRAM FUNDED?

The Florida Legislature determines the amount appropriated annually for the program. In state fiscal year 2011-2012, \$21,300,000 was appropriated.

Grant amounts are based largely on local funds invested in library service. Thus, more local money spent on library services means more potential for State Aid.

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HOW IS THE PROGRAM ADMINISTERED?

The State Aid to Libraries 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 Sections 257.14-257.25, *Florida Statutes*. Rules for administration of the program are outlined in Section 1B-2.011, *Florida Administrative Code*, and in the *State Aid to Libraries Grants Guidelines and Application*.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A political subdivision that has been designated by a county or municipality as the single library administrative unit is eligible to receive an annual Operating grant of no more than 25 percent of all local funds centrally expended by the political subdivision during the second preceding fiscal year for the operation and maintenance of a library. At a minimum, the library manager must have a master's degree from a library education program accredited by the American Library Association and two subsequent years of full-time, paid professional experience; the library must be open at least 40 hours per week; and the library must provide free 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/StateAid/StateAid.html>

Completed applications must be filed annually and are due to the Division by October 1. Additional reports and information are due December 1.

Applications submitted to the Division must include the grant agreement and supporting documents. Applications are reviewed by Grants Office staff for eligibility and completeness. A 30-day correction period is provided for applicants to correct deficiencies after staff have reviewed the applications. Grant agreements are executed for approved applications.

The grant is paid in two installments. The first is initiated after the agreement is executed. The second payment is requested in the spring.

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HOW MAY I USE STATE AID TO LIBRARIES GRANT FUNDS?

State Aid to Libraries grant funds must be expended for the operation and maintenance of the library and not for the purchase or construction of a library building or library quarters.

WHAT ARE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS?

Two reports must be submitted. The *Summary Financial Report*, showing how State Aid funds from the previous year were spent, is due December 1. An *Annual Statistical Report for Public Libraries* on library use and resources is due December 1.

I STILL HAVE QUESTIONS AND NEED TO KNOW MORE.

Contact the Office of Community Development's Grants Office.

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