



NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES

Sample Application LG-260781-OLS-26
Project Category: Community-Centered Implementation

Mesquite Public Library System

Amount awarded by IMLS:	\$81,700
Amount of cost share:	\$0

The Mesquite Public Library System in Texas will create a literacy and learning project. The project hopes to support the purchase of materials, equipment, and resources that enable library staff to operate in locations where residents already gather, increasing access to information, educational opportunities, and lifelong learning resources. In addition to traditional literacy offerings, the project will expand into workforce development, digital literacy, and other educational program areas that address community-identified needs. Implementation will occur through coordinated partnerships with organizations such as Mesquite Parks and Recreation, Historic Mesquite, Economic Development, the Mesquite Independent School District, local long-term care facilities, and additional community groups.

Attached are the following components excerpted from the original application.

- Narrative
- Schedule of completion

When preparing an application for the next deadline, be sure to follow the instructions in the most recent Notice of Funding Opportunity for the grant program to which you are applying.

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Mesquite Literacy and Learning Initiative Project

Introduction

The Mesquite Public Library System (MPL) is requesting **\$81,700** to advance a transformative approach to library service by expanding direct engagement within the community through the **Mesquite Literacy and Learning Initiative**. Funding will support the purchase of materials, equipment, and resources that enable library staff to operate in locations where residents already gather, increasing access to information, educational opportunities, and lifelong learning resources.

This initiative will use the **American Library Association's Literacy for All Toolkit** as a foundational framework for developing a broad range of literacy programs. In addition to traditional literacy offerings, the project will expand into workforce development, digital literacy, and other educational program areas that address community-identified needs. The project will also introduce innovative lending models designed to increase access to materials beyond the library's physical buildings.

Implementation will occur through coordinated partnerships with organizations such as **Mesquite Parks and Recreation, Historic Mesquite, Economic Development, the Mesquite Independent School District, local long-term care facilities**, and additional community groups. These partnerships will support program delivery, outreach, and sustained engagement across diverse populations throughout the city.

The result of partnerships supporting the Mesquite Literacy and Learning Initiative will be improved community prosperity through increasing access to resources and library led educational, literacy and workforce development programs throughout the community. This will be measured through quantitative data on usage and attendance coupled with qualitative data from partners that shares how the resources, services and programs impact residents.

Project Justification

The Mesquite Public Library System (MPL) is responsible for serving residents across a geographically dispersed and growing community. Mesquite is home to approximately 150,140 residents as of 2024, reflecting a modest but steady population increase since the 2020 Census. This population is diverse in age and background, with 27.9% of residents under 18, 11.3% over 65, and a racial and ethnic composition that includes significant White (29.9%), Black (27.5%), and Hispanic/Latino populations.

Many residents live in neighborhoods with limited low-cost transportation options, creating persistent barriers to accessing MPL's two traditional library locations. As the

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city's population density—approximately 3,000 residents per square mile—continues to shape community needs, the demand for flexible, mobile, and neighborhood-based library services has grown.

Although MPL has historically delivered programs at select community sites—such as schools and large public events, including the Read.Play.Talk Festival—community demand for off-site services continues to rise. Mesquite's demographic profile, which includes a median household income of \$72,537 and a poverty rate of 13.4%, underscores the importance of providing equitable access to educational and enrichment resources across all neighborhoods.

Community response to MPL's outreach efforts has been consistently positive, and requests for partnerships from local organizations increase each year. As funding constraints affect agencies across the region, MPL is increasingly viewed as a vital partner capable of delivering high-impact literacy, learning, and community-building services directly where residents live, work, and gather.

At the midpoint of the current fiscal year, MPL has already exceeded last year's total number of outreach events by 2.5%. More than 6,400 residents engaged with library staff at outreach events last year, and current trends indicate a projected increase of approximately 37% in community connections this year. This rapid growth demonstrates a clear need for expanded access to library services beyond the limitations of brick-and-mortar facilities.

To meet this need and support efficient use of public resources, MPL is preparing to transition to a service model that embeds library services directly within the community daily. This approach eliminates transportation barriers for residents, strengthens collaboration with partner organizations, and avoids the significant long-term costs associated with constructing and operating additional library buildings.

To implement this model, MPL will reorganize staffing to establish a dedicated **Outreach Services Team** capable of delivering library services in any location. Unlike traditional outreach teams that typically consist of two to three staff members, this team will include **eight employees**, representing a combination of full-time and part-time positions. This expanded structure will enable consistent, high-impact engagement across multiple neighborhoods and partner sites.

Residents will benefit from increased access to educational, literacy, and workforce development programs delivered directly within their communities. Partner organizations—including Mesquite Parks and Recreation, Historic Mesquite, the Mesquite Independent School District, long-term care facilities, and others—will gain the ability to offer enhanced services through collaboration with MPL. This model

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strengthens the city's overall service network while ensuring equitable access to information and resources for all residents.

Mesquite Literacy and Learning Initiative Work Plan

Background and Action Items

As the Library advances its new Master Plan and supports the 2025–2026 Council Goals, building stronger connections with and offering quality services to residents are priorities. Key actions for the Mesquite Literacy and Learning Initiative include:

- Engage with residents in the library and at locations throughout the community.
- Offering educational, literacy, and workforce development programming throughout the community in spaces where residents already gather.
- Increasing participation at community events.
- Implementing kiosk service in the community to provide library resources in convenient locations outside library locations.

These actions align with and support the NLG-L Program Goal to **“Develop, enhance, or disseminate replicable practices, programs, models, or tools to strengthen library and archival services for the American public”** by enhancing our current practices of library services and programs. Specific program types outlined above directly support **Objective 1.2 “Improve community prosperity through libraries and archives”** by providing workforce development through education and digital resources access, and increased access to library resources through kiosk service.

Strategies

1. The Project Manager will work with the Outreach Team to develop a list of programs and services that can be offered outside library walls. Use the [Literacy for All Toolkit Digital.pdf](#) to identify what we already have and what is possible. MPL will expand beyond the toolkit to support learning and literacy for all ages. Content used by permission of ODLOS, ALA.
2. The Project Manager will partner with local organizations to host educational, literacy and workforce development library led program in their spaces. Ideas for expanded partnerships beyond what we have now on page 7 of the toolkit.
3. The Project Manager and Outreach Team will promote partnerships and library services to communicate to the residents what is offered.
4. Expand library service offering and regularly evaluate to support meaningful growth.

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Services in Community

As a part of the Mesquite Literacy and Learning Initiative, the Project Manager and Outreach Team will look to provide services in the fall with a focus on the following:

- Expand services to other facilities
- Regular visits to designated partners
- Educational, literacy and workforce development classes will include:
 - Storytimes/Activities at afterschool Programs in Recreation Centers, local daycare facilities, and other community organizations
 - Library visits to local long term care facilities host craft and library resource use
 - Book a Librarian services at partner sites for:
 - learning how to use Virtual Library
 - Technology help/ skill-based classes
 - SRC and other reading challenge sign-up and awards at partner sites
 - Community events with partners like Parks and Recreation, Economic Development and Historic Mesquite, Inc.
 - Storywalk kits to take to large events or to lend to community organizations for their events to support reading anywhere
 - Library kiosk demonstrations and presentations to support learning how to borrow and access materials at a designated library kiosk site
 - Library led demonstrations at partner organizations on how to use library funded online resources like Learning Express Library, Job Search and other workplace development resources.

Major Activities

September 2026- Project Manager and Outreach Team will meet, develop program and service offerings, and connect with potential partners.

October 2026- Project Manager and Outreach Team implement and promote calendar of program and service offerings in community.

September 2027- Storywalk event with partner Historic Mesquite.

September- October 2026- Project Director will plan for library locker/kiosk

October 2026- Project Director will order library locker/kiosk

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January 2027- Project Director will work with City of Mesquite IT to install and test locker/kiosk

February 2027- Project Manager and Outreach Team launch and promote locker/kiosk service.

October – December 2026- Project Manager and Outreach Team monitor community programs/services and kiosk services and gather questionnaire information from partner organizations.

January 2027- Project Manager and Outreach Team evaluate data and make adjustments to programs and services as needed.

The evaluation of programs, services and materials will repeat evaluation period quarterly. Other quarterly periods include **January- March 2027, April- June 2027, July- September 2027 with evaluation and adjustment dates being April 2027, July 2027, October 2027.**

September 2027- Host a Storywalk event with partner Historic Mesquite.

October 2027- Project Manager and Outreach Team evaluate data and make adjustments to programs and services as needed.

November 2027- Project Director and Project Manager compile information into final reports.

December 2027- Project Director and Project Manager share reports.

Parties Involved

The Project Director has 20 years of experience with library program and over 15 years leading large-scale long-term project implementations, including several years of experience managing a federal grant in Ontario, developed this project and will work with the Project Manager to provide guidance and oversight. The Project Manager who will be a part of and supervise the Outreach Team has more than 20 years of experience planning programs and services, including several years of managing grant funded projects. The Outreach Team will consist of 3 librarians and 3 library coordinators who will have experience planning, promoting, leading and managing programs and services; they will be supported by a page who will assist with gathering materials and support by providing transportation help to get to community sites.

Several community partners, like Historic Mesquite and Economic Development have been consulted during the process to plan this project. They provided ideas for services and programs, like the workforce development classes and Storywalks at events. Their input was taken into consideration and added as components of the work plan. Their on-going feedback along with other partners on how services and programs are

supporting them, and their organizations will be gathered quarterly and included in final reports. These reports will be shared with library stakeholders, like board members, to keep them informed of library services and programs.

Evaluation and Measurement

Evaluation of services will be done on a quarterly basis using data outlined below in addition to reviewing with stakeholders and partners how the programs support their needs and goals. The hard data listed in the chart below will be compiled into monthly reports to stakeholders and will be shared yearly using the fact sheets we already share on the website for everyone to view. Questionnaire information will be compiled into a summary report and shared with key stakeholders and partners.

Objective	Type Of Data	Target	Frequency
Library Programming in Community	• Number of Programs	• Increase programs by 5% compared to the 2025 baseline	• Monthly/Yearly
	• Number of program attendees	• Increase program attendance by 5% compared to the 2025 baseline	• Monthly/Yearly
Library Online Resources-workforce development	• Number of sessions for specific workforce development resources	• Increase usage by 5% compared to the 2025 baseline	• Monthly/Yearly
Increase Engagement at Community Events	• Number of events attended	• Increase event attendance by staff by 5%	• Monthly/Yearly
	• Number of booth visits	• Increase attendance by 5%	• Monthly/Yearly
Implement new technologies to support services/ kiosk service	• Number of kiosks	• There is no baseline; baselines will need to be established	• Monthly/Quarterly
	• Number of items accessed		
	• Number of users using kiosk	• Increase usage each quarter by 5%	

Partner Questionnaire Sample Questions

1. How did the library hosted programs and services in this quarter correlate to your mission and goals?
2. What programs and services provided by the library did you find most or least helpful? Why?

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3. How would not offering the library programs and service affect your organization?
Are the programs and services being delivered to the intended audience? If not, what are some obstacles to achieving this goal?
4. Are the desired outcomes being achieved? If not, why might this be the case?
5. Are there any unintended side effects from the programs and services?

Project Results

Initial results of the Mesquite Literacy and Learning Initiative will be learning, knowledge and skill building. This will be evidenced by more residents moving into higher education courses and obtaining skilled jobs. Longer term results of the project will be residents actively seeking resources to support literacy and on-going learning. This will be evidenced by more residents using library and other community educational resources. The ultimate impact will be improved individual and community prosperity, because the residents will have robust knowledge backgrounds and developed literacy and workforce skills. This longer-term outcome is harder to show direct evidence; however, some areas where this will be reflected are higher demand for higher skilled jobs and increased employment rates in those positions by residents. All of these outcomes will be made possible by increasing access to resources and library led educational, literacy and workforce development programs throughout the community, which is the need identified as the focus for the project. The project will not end in 2027 but will continue on as base programs and services provided by the dedicated Outreach Team.

Results and findings will be shared as an annual report at the end of 2027, which will continue in the future as an annual report. The annual project report will be available as a PDF document shared to stakeholders and partners and available upon request to other individuals.

Schedule of Completion- Mesquite Literacy and Learning Initiative

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