



**TEXAS STATE LIBRARY  
AND  
ARCHIVES COMMISSION**

# Application for TSLAC CARES Grant – Cycle 1



## Name of Library

**Fort Bend County Libraries**

## Project Manager

**Jill Cherie Sumpter**

Phone Number **281-633-4766 office; 713-545-6091 cell**

Email Address **Jill.Sumpter@fortbend.lib.tx.us**

## Name of Legal Entity

**Fort Bend County**

DUNS # **081497075**

TINS # **746001969**

## Grant Proposal:

1. **Needs Assessment** (50 points): Describe identified community needs arising from or highlighted by the COVID-19 emergency. *(Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.)*

In mid-March 2020, in response to increasing concerns about infection rates, Fort Bend County Libraries (FBCL), a twelve (12) branch library system southwest of Houston, Texas, closed its buildings to the public. In its place, several services were modified for this new environment:

- A new curbside pick-up service was initiated and staff were reassigned support roles to this new service;
- The library increased response capabilities for patron phone support;
- The library ventured into a commitment for significant and sustained video content for adult, young adult, and youth programming; and
- Electronic resources, where possible, were increased in answer to overwhelming demand.

On March 20 at 5:00 pm, FBCL was ordered by the County Judge to close the buildings to the staff and only allow essential functions (e.g. clearing book drops, building maintenance, network/technology services, etc.). While this halted the library's curbside service, it did not stop staffers' commitment to provide programming/training services, response to email, support for electronic databases and e-media (books, music, videos). Armed with personally-owned technology, many staff used it to provide remote video programming, live and prerecorded, for the residents of Fort Bend County. This included story-times with educational content, database resource instruction, and much more.

The video content produced and provided by FBCL was overwhelmingly appreciated by the public who were very appreciative of the fact that the library interpreted a new way to provide enrichment, training, and information to its citizens. Not only were children's programming popular, new interest and exposure to many of the databases were developed and made throughout the six-week closure. Toward the end of the closure, FBCL developed and implemented an online home-grown version of an electronic library card using its Polaris integrated library system database. This e-Card may be used to access nearly all of the electronic resources of the library and allows for check out of e-media. As soon as it was debuted, requests immediately started being received.

### Challenges

However, not all services were able to be enhanced. Our circulating hotspot program halted in its tracks. As time progressed, the county started to experience significant economic hardships with furloughs and company closings (temporary and permanent) at all socio-economic levels. Faced with hard choices, families, whose income was slashed and/or eliminated because of job loss, have had to make difficult choices because of dwindling funds for food, lodging, health, utilities, and Internet access.

The loss of Internet and access to library resources has been particularly felt by families with school-age children. With the closure of school facilities, families have been expected to "homeschool" their children by utilizing e-resources and computer technology to participate in online classes – all of which requires Internet access. Lack of Internet access has also been an obstacle for job-hunters needing to file for unemployment or search for and apply for jobs, and small-business owners needing to apply for government loans.

If having to forego Internet service, more and more residents in our geographic population of 800,000+ have even less access to library services in a time where electronic access is an important supplement for the loss of physical connections and information. Once we begin the slow process of gradually opening the library, access to computers and Internet service will also be gradual. The library seeks to enhance its current circulating hotspot program to address the loss of data service and need for data service by its residents.

To supplement our online content for our residents in times such as these, FBCL staff have risen to the challenge in creating content for its patrons. However, the mixture of varying software and hardware available has hampered efforts in what can be provided, caused potential conflicts of interest in financial funding between the county and its employees, and presents a sometimes-mixed level of production quality. The library seeks to standardize the software subscriptions and equipment necessary to provide the staff the means to create interactive and prerecorded online content that will be offered in lieu of the traditional, in-person programming the public has come to expect from our libraries, but because of the pandemic and closure of our facilities, have been unable to participate. This will also enable us to ensure that future programming will consist of the best of both worlds – digital online classes as well as exceptional in-person programs and events that will help us continue our goal of enriching lives and expanding minds.

2. **Grant Request** (25 points): Describe how your program or service can meet identified community need arising from or highlighted by the COVID-19 emergency. (*Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.*)

Fort Bend County Libraries (FBCL) seeks a TSLAC Cares grant to meet the new COVID-19 environment in a two-pronged approach.

1. FBCL seeks to nearly double its existing circulating hotspot program by adding 75 more units to its current fleet of 80, bringing a total of 155 units available to patrons.
2. FBCL seeks to purchase video-recording/editing software, screen-capture software, Zoom video-conferencing host accounts, and audiovisual-associated equipment.

#### Hotspots

In September of 2017, FBCL started its circulating Hotspot program in partnership with AT&T. AT&T provides the hotspots at no charge, with no charge for replacements or lost parts. Hotspots may also be refreshed for a new unit every 12-24 months if desired. The one-time cost to FBCL is a case (\$~8.00/unit) to hold the unit and a small, indirect charge to catalog the unit into its Polaris integrated library system database. AT&T also provides for a number of spares that can be immediately activated by library staff to keep full service at all times. These units are in a penny-suspended state (\$0.01/unit/month) and are not charged the data rate.

FBCL has an unlimited-data, unlimited-speed subscription for its hotspots at \$37.99/unit/month. AT&T provides an Internet filter for the hotspots. Each hotspot can connect up to 15 devices and can operate for up to 22 hours of continuous use between charges. Hotspots are checked out for 7 days at a time and are available for check out on a first-come, first-served basis.

Ever since the debut of the program, every hotspot is checked out as soon as it becomes available, often exceeding what would be considered a full checkout rate for the month. Since the tragic circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic and FBCL's shift to providing virtual programming and more content digitally, our residents most keenly feel the loss of Internet access.

In the event that the library buildings must again close in response to a COVID-19 or similar event, FBCL will develop a means to continue its circulating Hotspot service during the closure. Staff in the Library Technology department, as well as in the Circulation department, are well-trained in the smooth operation of this program, and no training ramp-up will be required. Other than the receipt of the cases and the hotspots, implementation of the additional hotspots should be almost immediate. Although all patrons of Fort Bend County Libraries may check out items from any location, initial distribution of hotspots among the branch locations will be based on a needs-assessment and interest of the local community.

#### Online content – videos, interactive video conferencing, prerecorded content, etc.

Since COVID-19, FBCL staff have been extremely creative in providing digital content in the form of story-time videos, puppet shows, training classes, book clubs, and other educational audio/video content. However, the software and equipment used to make this content or provide access to it has been library staff's personal accounts, subscriptions, and/or equipment.

To answer these challenges, FBCL consulted with its Marketing/Communications Office, its Staff Development/Training department, and the staff who have thus far been involved in providing online content in its various forms on behalf of the library system. The products chosen were considered for functionality, ease of integration, skill-level of staff, learning curve, and price.

System-wide training of the software and equipment will be provided by the Staff Development/Training department staff who already have experience in all of the chosen products. Existing equipment, such as laptops, iPads, computers, data storage, and other necessary items have been identified and have been certified to work with the products outlined in this grant application. Storage of online content will be accomplished via the library's Dropbox accounts, external storage, and SAN.

FBCL is planning to provide a complete Summer Reading Challenge, adult programming and training, library staff training, and other opportunities in a variety of online audio/video formats – video conferencing, live streaming, pre-recorded content, recorded screen-capturing sessions. Indeed, since we have ventured into this service format, we see this becoming a new standard library amenity for the residents of Fort Bend County. With twelve (12) locations and an administration that will also produce such content, we are looking to outfit each location and administration with a shared enterprise Zoom account package, video-editing software, screen-capture software, and video-recording equipment.

3. **Budget** (15 points): Please indicate what items the library will purchase, as well as a cost per unit, where indicated. If exact quantity and/or cost is unavailable, please provide an estimate. (Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.)

1. AT&T Hotspots, Qty 75 Purchase cost \$0.00/unit \$0.00
2. AT&T Hotspots, Qty 75 unlimited data/speed \$37.99/ 75 units / 12 months \$34,191.00 annually
3. Hotspot cases, co2crea Hrd trvl case Qty 75 \$7.99 / 75 units \$599.25
4. Zoom Business 13 hosts – \$216.56/month \$2,598.70 annually
5. Adobe Premiere Pro + Premiere Rush, Qty 13 \$20.99/13 units/ 12months \$3,274.44 annually
6. ScreencastMatic Team Premier, 25 pc pkg. \$32.50/ 12 months \$390.00 annually
7. Blue Snowball iCE USB Microphone, Qty 13 \$48.99/unit 636.87
8. TrippLite Univ Phn/Tblt Dsk Clamp Mnt 3.5-10" Qty 26 \$37.99/unit \$987.74

Total single-time purchases \$2,223.86

Annual costs \$40,454.14

Sub Total \$42,678.00

Indirect Costs \$4,267.80

TOTAL GRANT COST \$46,945.80

Lines 1-3: These line items refer to the expansion of 75 hotspot units to the library's existing circulating fleet. It includes one year of unlimited data/speed service and the purchase of cases to circulate the hotspots. There is no charge for the hotspots themselves or replacements for damaged/lost units.

Line 4: This covers 13 hosts for Zoom subscriptions to conduct live, interactive video-conferencing for one year. Zoom will also be used to record video-conferencing sessions for later broadcasts and/or archival purposes.

Line 5: The Adobe Premiere Pro + Premiere Rush is an annual subscription for video-editing software.

Line 6: ScreencastMatic is a one-year subscription for software to capture and record computer video and audio for training purposes. A package of 25 computer clients is requested so that staff from multiple departments in each building may have simultaneous access for recording their respective sessions.

Lines 7-8: The equipment in these line-items are for video-production peripherals. To supplement the library's existing equipment that can be used for video recordings -- laptops, webcam, smartphones, and tablets -- desk-clamp mounts and high-quality microphones are needed to stabilize video captures and produce useable content for our patrons. The library is requesting one (1) microphone per building. Two (2) mounts are requested per location so that multiple angles of a session can be recorded and edited for maximum effect and clarity.

4. **Sustainability** (10 points): Describe the resources that will be used to support the program or service developed through the grant in the future. *(Please limit answer to 5000 characters, including spaces.)*

**Hotspots - \$34,191.00 annual**

In its FY2021 operating-budget request, Fort Bend County Libraries (FBCL) included a line item for an additional fifty (50) hotspots to its fleet. Although we know that the FY2021 budget will be targeted for efficiencies in light of the current economic downturn, the library is confident that the funding to continue the project will be granted. The library also fully anticipates the expansion, with the additional 75 units requested in this grant, will be committed in the FY2022 budget. Indeed, the popularity and need in the community for digital access is great in this region of 800,000+ and will necessitate the continuation of this program, especially as FBCL and its governmental authority strives to produce more and more services in a digital format.

**Online video content - \$6,263.14 annual**

The awesome response by the public to the online video content produced by FBCL has convinced administration that a format addition to its already rich programming lineup to include digital and physical content is not only welcome but overdue. COVID-19 and its ilk may be in the picture for some time to come and protecting the public while providing the informational, training, and/or educational content in a virtual environment will be incorporated as a standard service of Fort Bend County Libraries. The library will seek to add this in its FY2022 and future operating-budget requests.

The Technology department will add the equipment purchased through this grant to its inventory and refresh schedule so that at the proper time and as technology advances, equipment to maintain the digital video presence will be available.

This grant program will fund expansion of digital access in areas of Texas where such access is lacking, including the purchase of internet-enabled devices and provisions for technical support services in response to the disruption of schooling and other community services during the COVID-19 emergency. Additionally, funding may be used to address efforts that prevent, prepare for, and respond to situations arising from the COVID-19 emergency.

Suggested supplies, materials, and services are listed below. This list is not exhaustive and is provided to aid your planning process. Provide a detailed budget indicating what items the library will purchase, as well as a cost per unit, where indicated. If exact quantity and/or cost information is unavailable, please provide an estimate.

a. *Supplies/Materials*

- Camera/video equipment/accessories
- Computers - network
- Computer hardware, software, and accessories
- Consumables (paper, toner, cleaning supplies, etc.)
- E-books/books related to program
- Furniture
- Mobile devices and related apps
- Printers/scanners
- Wi-Fi hotspots (including service through August 31, 2021)

b. *Services*

- Databases (dissimilar to TexShare or TexQuest offerings)
- Postage, printing, signage
- Software as a Service (SaaS)
- IT support (computer/web)
- Training - patrons and/or staff
- Venue fees (room rental, etc.)
- Contract temporary help
- Equipment rental
- Professional services (workshop speakers, graphic design, etc.)
- Promotion

c. *Indirect costs*

CERTIFICATION: I certify, to the best of my ability, that the statements made in this application are true, that the information provided is correct, and that I am authorized to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organization.

**County Judge, K.P. George**



County Judge KP George

**5/26/2020**

Name & Title

Signature

Date

Submit a completed application, application certification form, and CIPA form via e-mail or mail. By email, please send attention: TSLAC CARES Grant to [grants@tsl.texas.gov](mailto:grants@tsl.texas.gov) or mail to:

**TSLAC CARES Grant**

Texas State Library and Archives Commission  
Library Development & Networking Division  
PO Box 12927  
Austin, TX 78701

If mailing the application, only submit one original packet. Do not staple or bind the packet. Total application packet is limited to the application certification form, the grant proposal, and the CIPA form.



**Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA)  
Certification for Federally Funded  
Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC)  
Competitive Grants**

(April 21, 2020 - August 31, 2021)

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant/subrecipient, I hereby certify that the following is true for the proposed project submitted under the TSLAC CARES GRANT CYCLE 1 grant program\*:

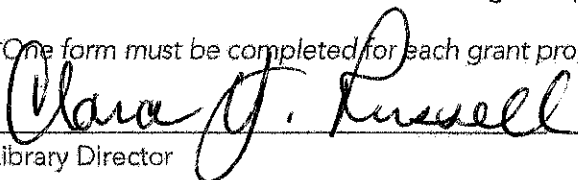
(Select only **one** of the following options):

- The applicant/subrecipient public library has complied with the requirements of Section 9134(f)(1) of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).
- The requirements of Section 9134(f) of the Library Services and Technology Act do not apply to the applicant/subrecipient library because no funds made available under the LSTA program will be used to purchase computers used to access the Internet or to pay for direct costs associated with accessing the Internet for a public library or public elementary school or secondary school library that does not receive discounted E-Rate services under the Communications Act of 1934, as amended.
- The applicant/subrecipient is not a public library.

I further certify that **one** of the following is true:

- No LSTA funds from the grant award will be used by the subrecipient to purchase computers used to access the Internet or to pay for direct costs associated with accessing the Internet for a public library or public elementary school or secondary school library served by the applicant/subrecipient; or,
- If any LSTA grant funds are used for such purposes, the subrecipient will obtain the appropriate certifications from libraries receiving such purchases or payments.

\*One form must be completed for each grant program for which you are applying.

  
Library Director

**Clara Russell**

Printed Name

**5/20/2020**

Date

**Fort Bend County Libraries**

Library Name

**TSLAC CARES Grant Cycle 1**

Grant Program