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## Access Granted: Using Grants to Enhance Services

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## Access Granted: Using Grants to Enhance Services

### Abstract

Tara Smith, Youth Services Manager at Cherokee Public Library shares experiences of preparing grants and their potential benefits, as well provides resources to help with finding and writing grants.

## Access Granted: Using Grants to Enhance Services

As children's and teen librarians, we are often asked to do a lot with few resources—so how do we locate additional funding sources to provide even more?

Cherokee County Public Library is a small system, and we are fortunate to have fairly current technology. Still, we hoped to find a way to enhance our services for children and teens with mobile devices and computers for homework help, so we applied for a Library Services and Technology Act grant from the South Carolina State Library. Through the grant, we implemented a Learning Resource Center with dedicated technology and resources for students to complete assignments and research. The application, implementation, and evaluation process for this grant was quite work- and time-intensive, but absolutely worth it, given the results it's had for our library and our community.

Grant writing and implementation is certainly hard work, but can be truly rewarding for staff, library systems, and the communities they serve. As you apply for grants, there are several things to keep in mind. First, you must determine a specific goal; funders are often more likely to award money to specific projects or programs with measurable outcomes. You should also be mindful of the funder's goals for grant-funded programs, and ensure that your application aligns with those goals. A final thing to consider is the requirements of the grant—do you have to provide matching funds? Are there conditions you must meet just to apply, such as professional membership or serving a certain age group? Can you complete your project in the allotted time? Do you have a team ready to help you implement the grant? Ensuring that you will be completely prepared to begin with

your plan if you receive the grant is absolutely vital to successful implementation.

The South Carolina State Library administers LSTA large competitive grants annually, and is a great opportunity for libraries looking to improve services and maximize resources. However, there are countless other grants available for libraries for a variety of purposes, if you know where to look. Grant opportunities are available from government, public, and private funders, all with specific goals, requirements, timelines, and evaluation measures. Funding ranges from a few hundred dollars to thousands, all depending on the funder, the proposed project, and the strength of the application. For help finding and writing grants, check out these resources:

- American Library Association. "ALA Grants." Accessed September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014. <http://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/awards/browse/grnt>.
- Landau, Herbert B. *Winning Library Grants: A Game Plan*. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2010.
- MacKellar, Pamela H., and Stephanie K. Gerding. "Library Grants." Last modified August 12, 2014. <http://librarygrants.blogspot.com/>.
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- Maxwell, Nancy Kalikow, ed. *The ALA Book of Library Grant Money*, 9<sup>th</sup> ed. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2014.
- Scholastic, Inc. "Library Grants." Accessed September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

<http://www.scholastic.com/librarians/programs/grants.htm>.

- South Carolina State Library. "LSTA at the South Carolina State Library: LSTA Grant Programs." Last modified September 3, 2014.  
<http://statelibrary.sc.libguides.com/lsta/lsta-grant-programs>.
- Target Brands, Inc. "Early Childhood Reading Grants." Accessed September 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014.  
<https://corporate.target.com/corporate-responsibility/grants/early-childhood-reading-grants>.
- Wells Fargo. "Private Foundation Grants." Accessed September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2014.  
<https://www.wellsfargo.com/privatefoundationgrants/>.

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