

**CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY
LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA)
FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018
PITCH-AN-IDEA GRANT APPLICATION**

ELEMENT 1: BASIC INFORMATION (please see application instructions for additional information)

Applicant Information

- | | | | |
|---|---|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Library/Organization
Braille Institute Library | 2. Library's DUNS Number
008287153 | | |
| 3. Legal Business Name <i>(must match name registered with Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN))</i>
Braille Institute of America Inc. | | | |
| 4. Project Coordinator Name
Reed Stregge | 5. Project Coordinator Title
Director of Library Services | | |
| 6. Email Address
rwstregge@brailleinstitute.org | 7. Business Phone Number
(323) 906-3185 | | |
| 8. Mailing Address
729 North Vermont Avenue | City
Los Angeles | State
CA | Zip
90029 |

Project Information

- 9. Project Title** Braille Literacy for the Next Century
- 10. LSTA Funds Requested** \$25,355
- 11. Cash Match & In-Kind** \$12,820
- 12. Total Project Cost** \$38,175
- 13. California's LSTA Goals** *(Check one goal that best describes the project)*
- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Literate California | <input type="checkbox"/> Bridging the Digital Divide |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 21st Century Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Information Connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 22nd Century Tools | <input type="checkbox"/> Community Connections |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Content Creation/Preservation | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ensuring Library Access for All |
- 14. Primary Audience for project** *(Select all that apply.)*
- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adults | <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-School Children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Rural Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Immigrants/Refugees | <input type="checkbox"/> School Age Children |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Intergenerational Groups (Excluding Families) | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizens |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Library Staff , Volunteers and/or Trustees | <input type="checkbox"/> Statewide Public |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Low Income | <input type="checkbox"/> Suburban Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non/Limited English Speaking Persons | <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> People with Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Populations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> People with Limited Functional Literacy | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Adults and Teens |

ELEMENT 2: PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SUMMARY

Describe how this project was identified as a need, how it relates to your library's strategic plan, what will be accomplished if this project is implemented, and how you will know whether your project is successful. Summary should relate to activities in the timeline (Element 4) and include statistical information to support the project.

Since 1934, Braille Institute has provided equal access to information for people who are unable to read or hold standard print materials. As one of the largest branches of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, our library is the primary destination for Southern California residents who need reading material in accessible formats, including braille. We currently have around 1,400 braille readers registered for our library service. Our organization also teaches braille, and at any given time provides in-person instruction for about 100 adult students. We also host a regular braille book club. Unfortunately, braille readers have access to only a small fraction of the content that their sighted peers enjoy. Braille Institute Library patrons, for example, can choose from just 22,000 printed braille titles. Printed braille is expensive and laborious to produce, and can be cumbersome to store, ship, and carry. Unsurprisingly, printed braille checkouts at our library are quite low. In 2016, we circulated nearly one million physical items, but a mere 5% of those items were braille books and magazines. It is our responsibility to ensure equal access for our readers, and digital braille provides the best opportunity to remedy this severe inequity right now. Tech-savvy library patrons who can access the Braille and Audio Reading Download service (BARD) can choose from 14,000 digital braille books through the National Library Service, as well as over 500,000 titles from Bookshare, a non-profit library program for the blind. The challenge is to provide the tools and training to as many braille readers as possible, so that they can access more material, and so that we can start to solve what the World Blind Union calls "the book famine."

Thankfully, the world of accessible library service is currently on the cusp of a game-changing technological change. Up until this year, the price of refreshable braille displays has ranged from \$2,500 to \$15,000. (Refreshable braille displays are electronic devices that pair with computers and mobile devices and allow the user to write, read, and take notes.) This year, the American Printing House for the Blind is releasing a new refreshable braille display called the "Orbit Reader 20" with a price point of \$500. Our proposal is to acquire 40 of these new devices to circulate to Braille Institute Library patrons who wish to improve their braille reading skills. Program participants will receive the device free of charge through our existing distribution platform, which has been operating successfully for many decades. Participants will receive their devices on indefinite loan, without fines or fees, for as long as they wish to continue. This proposed project, however, includes much more than just passing out a new piece of technology. In fact, the most impactful parts of this program will be the training and assessment elements. Program participants will receive free training for their devices through our Connection Pointe technology centers. Braille Institute technology instructors are often visually impaired themselves, and our organization prides itself on empathetic and effective training. At a series of workshops, participants will learn how to sign up for BARD and Bookshare and how to download books and magazines. Technology trainers at each of our six centers will also be available for troubleshooting in person or over the phone for those who can't attend a workshop. Furthermore, this program will serve as a one-of-a-kind opportunity for the State of California to gather outcome measurements at an early stage of a potentially transformative shift in adaptive technology. This project will include pre- and post-program assessments and a post-program focus group to determine the impact that these devices will have on each person's reading habits and quality of life. The Braille Institute has a long and successful track record of successfully engaging with readers and guiding them through changes in the field of adaptive reading.

Our organization has identified a strong need for adaptive technology training. In 2015, Braille Institute completed a comprehensive opinion research project designed to gather input about the future of our organization. Over 650 people participated in the project, which included randomly selected Braille Institute students and members of the general public. The research clearly demonstrated that the strongest needs were technology instruction and access to information. When asked how to improve the Braille Institute library experience, for example, the most popular response was "more books/more variety." When asked which program or service they would most like to see added to Braille Institute, the number one answer was "classes about the use of new technology." Similarly, Braille Institute conducted a separate survey of library users in 2016 and gathered nearly 2,000 responses. When asked which of our free services were most appealing, the most popular answer was "technology education." Nearly two-thirds of respondents chose this option, which indicates strong demand for the technology training curriculum that Braille Institute provides. As we prepare for our second century of service, encouraging more braille reading through the use of digital technology is a key part of our strategic plan. For Fiscal Year 2017/18, the President and Board of Directors of Braille Institute have identified "improving the impact and quality of programs" as a key goal. This proposed project closely matches that goal and creates a model for delivering and evaluating adaptive technology training programs in future years.

ELEMENT 3: PARTNERSHIPS

Please list all formal partners for your project here. Please attach (under Element 7) a copy of your signed agreement with each partner, which outlines the role the partner will play and the resources the partner will contribute.

Partner Name	Organization Type (see instructions for valid entries)	Legal Type (see instructions for valid entries)	Role on Project	Resources That Partner Will Contribute (materials/funds/staff)
Los Angeles City College	School	School District	Recruitment and promotion partner	Staff time

ELEMENT 4: PLANNING AND EVALUATION

Please answer each area concisely and completely. **For section A-F limit responses to four pages.**

A. Project Intent *(Check only one that best describes the project)*

Lifelong Learning

- ☐ Improve users' formal education
- ☒ Improve users' general knowledge and skills

Information Access

- ☐ Improve users' ability to discover information
- ☐ Improve users' ability to obtain information resources

Institutional Capacity

- ☐ Improve the library workforce
- ☐ Improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure
- ☐ Improve library's operations

Economic & Employment Development

- ☐ Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support
- ☐ Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources

Human Services

- ☐ Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family, or household finances
- ☐ Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health & wellness
- ☐ Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills

Civic engagement

- ☐ Improve users' ability to participate in their community
- ☐ Improve users' ability to participate in community conversation around topics of concern

B. Project Purpose – Short statement which answers the questions: we will do what, for whom, for what expected benefit(s).

The purpose of this project is to encourage increased braille reading among visually impaired adults. In order to fulfill this purpose, Braille Institute will leverage new adaptive technology to provide far more digital braille content than is currently available for our community of readers. Furthermore, program participants will be provided free in-person training and support with refreshable braille devices throughout the grant year and beyond. Braille Institute specializes in effective and empathetic technology training for visually impaired adults (many of our technology trainers are blind themselves), as well as superior service for library patrons. The benefits for the 40 participants in the first grant-funded year will be substantially increased access to content and improved skill with digital braille technology. For our organization, the State of California, and the National Library Service network, the benefits will include a new set of outcome measurements that can serve as a foundation for planning further programs to engage and educate readers about the upcoming transformative changes in adaptive reading technology.

C. Anticipated Project Outputs – Measures of services and/or products to be created/provided.

Measurable outputs will include the number of community organizations engaged, the number of program participants, the number of refreshable braille displays distributed, the amount of workshops hosted, and the number of workshop participants. We will produce 1,000 pieces of marketing material, including accessible fliers, bookmarks, and audio recordings. These items will be distributed throughout Braille Institute and to 25 community organizations in Southern California that have a track record of delivering Braille Institute information to their user communities. We anticipate 40 program participants, 30 of whom will attend one of 5 in-person training workshops during the grant year. All 40 participants will have the option of over-the-telephone training, and we anticipate that all 40 will complete the pre- and post-assessment evaluation tool. Lastly, we will measure the amount of braille books checked out by participants (both digital and paper). We predict that checkouts of digital braille materials will increase by at least 15%, as measured by statistics from the Braille and Audio Reading Download Service (BARD).

D. Anticipated Project Outcome(s) – What change is expected in the target audience's skills, knowledge, behavior, attitude, and/or status/life condition? How will you measure these outcomes? (for examples see attachment B of the application instructions)

At the beginning the grant year, Braille Institute will develop a pre-and post-program outcome assessment tool that will be distributed to all participants at the beginning and end of the program. Measurable outcomes will include improved skill with the new devices, more satisfaction with improved access to content, and an improved quality of life as a result of more reading for enrichment and leisure. We predict that 90% of those participants who complete the program will report increased skill with the refreshable braille device. Eighty percent will report high satisfaction with increased access to content, and 75% will report an improved quality of life as a result of more reading. At the conclusion of the grant-funded year, we will conduct a focus group at our Los Angeles center for the purpose of assessing satisfaction with the program, confidence with the new technology, and feelings of self-reliance. Braille Institute also regularly conducts focus groups with students and patrons from our wide range of programs, and we've found these exercises to be important for both evaluating past performance and suggesting ways to improve our services in the future. These outcome measurements will be used to improve and expand our technology training programs after the completion of the grant year. As Braille Institute prepares to begin its second century of service, our goal is to establish our library as a center for engagement and education.

E. Briefly describe how this project will be financially supported in the future.

The project will be sustained beyond the grant period through a fundraising campaign to purchase more refreshable braille devices for distribution to braille readers and learners. This campaign will be built around the results of the project in the LSTA-funded grant year. Braille Institute has a long and successful track record of integrating new technology and training into its operations.

F. Activity Information. Activities are action(s) through which the intent or objective of a project are accomplished. Four activity types have been identified, each with select methods to help you describe how you will carry out this project. Indicate activity types that require a significant commitment of resources to the project (representing 10% or more of total project resources).

1. ☒ **Instruction** - Involves an interaction for knowledge or skill transfer and how learning is delivered or experienced. *(Check all that apply and provide a description including whether the format will be in-person, virtual, or both)*
 - ☒ Program - Formal interaction and active user engagement (e.g., a class on computer skills).
 - ☐ Presentation - Formal interaction and passive user engagement (e.g., an author's talk),
 - ☐ Consultation - Informal interaction with an individual or group of individuals (library staff or other professional) who provide expert advice or reference services to individuals, units, or organizations.
 - ☐ Other

Description: As a condition of receiving a refreshable braille device, program participants will be asked to attend a free in-person training workshop in one of our Connection Pointe technology training centers, located in Los Angeles, Anaheim, San Diego, Rancho Mirage, Santa Barbara, and Laguna Hills. These workshops will be led by our skilled technology trainers and will utilize our unique curriculum that is designed to generate successful outcomes for visually impaired technology students. For those who are unable to visit a Braille Institute location in person, we will offer over-the-phone assistance and support throughout the year.

2. ☒ **Content** - Involves the acquisition, development, or transfer of information and how information is made accessible. *(Check all that apply and provide a description including whether the format will be physical, digital, or both)*
 - ☒ Acquisition - Selecting, ordering, and receiving materials for library or archival collections by purchase, exchange, or gift, which may include budgeting and negotiating with outside agencies (i.e. publishers, vendors) to obtain resources. May also include procuring software or hardware for the purposes of storing and/or retrieving information or enabling the act of experiencing, manipulating, or otherwise interacting with an information resource.
 - ☐ Creation - Design or production of an information tool or resource (e.g., digital objects, curricula, manuals). Includes digitization or the process of converting data to digital format for processing by a computer.

- ☐ Description - Apply standardized descriptive information and/or apply such information in a standardized format to items or groups of items in a collection for purposes of intellectual control, organization, and retrieval.
- ☐ Lending - Provision of a library's resources and collections through the circulation of materials (general circulation, reserves). May also refer to the physical or electronic delivery of documents from a library collection to the residence or place of business of a library user, upon request.
- ☐ Preservation - Effort that extends the life or use life of a living or non-living collection, the individual items or entities included in a collection, or a structure, building or site by reducing the likelihood or speed of deterioration.
- ☐ Other

Description: The Braille Institute Library will lend physical refreshable braille devices to library patrons through our existing distribution platform, with the same policies and guidelines that have governed our digital talking player program since 2009. As a distributor of the NLS BARD program, we will also continue to lend digital braille content for these devices.

3. ☒ **Planning & Evaluation** - Involves design, development, or assessment of operations, services, or resources and when information is collected, analyzed, and/or disseminated. *(Check all that apply and provide a description including whether the format will be in-house or third-party)*
- ☐ Retrospective - Research effort that involves historical assessments of the condition of a project, program, service, operation, resource and/or user group.
 - ☒ Prospective - Research effort that projects or forecasts a future condition of a project, program, service, operation, resource, and/or user group.

Description: This project represents a significant change in operations, and the outputs and outcomes measured during the LSTA-funded grant year will provide a valuable foundation for planning which types of devices and content can most effectively be lent to library patrons through our existing distribution platform in the future. The planning and evaluation will be done entirely in-house. Moving forward, the research team at the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is beginning to develop a wireless reading device that will replace the current digital talking book player for Americans with print disabilities. The results from this LSTA-funded project will provide valuable data about how to effectively manage these types of new technology initiatives, particularly with regards to training and assessment.

4. ☒ **Procurement** – May only be used for projects with an Institutional Capacity Intent. Acquiring or leasing facilities; purchasing equipment/supplies, hardware/software, or other materials (not content) that support general library infrastructure. *(Provide a description)*

Description: As part of this grant, Braille Institute will acquire 42 "Orbit 20 Reader" refreshable braille devices from the American Printing House. Forty of these devices will be distributed to library patrons, and two will be used by Braille Institute staff members for training purposes.

ELEMENT 5: GRANT TIMELINE/ACTIVITIES

Show each major project activity and when it will be started and/or completed throughout the project. The timeline should correspond to the activities described in Planning and Evaluation. Please put an X in each pertaining month.

Activity	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Procure Refreshable Braille Displays	X													
Create and Distribute Marketing Materials	X	X	X											
Promote Program through Community Partners	X	X	X											
Recruit and Identify Program Participants	X	X	X											
Create Training Workshop Curriculum	X	X	X											
Develop Pre- and Post-Program Assessment Tool	X	X	X											
Train Staff on Troubleshooting and Support			X											
Conduct Pre-Program Assessment				X										
Distribute Refreshable Braille Displays				X										
Provide In-Person Training Workshops and Phone Support				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collect Program Outputs				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Collect Outcome Measurements from In-Person Attendees					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Create Mid-Year LSTA Report							X							
Conduct Post-Program Assessment with Participants													X	X
Conduct Focus Group													X	
Create Sustainability Plan for Future Years													X	
Write and Submit Final LSTA Report														X

ELEMENT6: BUDGET

The budget should clearly identify the amounts requested and from what sources.

Budget Category	LSTA	Cash Match & In-Kind	Total
Salaries/Wages/Benefits			
Director of Library Services 100 hours @ \$65	\$0	\$6,500	\$6,500
Materials Development Coordinator 80 hours @ \$25	\$0	\$2,000	\$2,000
Technology Trainers (2x) 160 hours @ \$25	\$0	\$4,000	\$4,000
Accessibility Instructor at LA Community College 10 hours @ \$32	\$0	\$320	\$320
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$12,820	\$12,820
Description: In-kind personnel costs will include 100 hours of overall project management from the Director of Library Services, 80 hours of device management from the Materials Development Coordinator (including inventorying, shipping, and tracking) and 160 hours of workshop preparation and training sessions from two Braille Institute technology trainers (80 hours each). In-kind personnel costs will also include 10 hours of program support from one Accessibility Instructor at the Office of Special Services at Los Angeles Community College. This instructor at our partner organization will help promote the program and assist in recruiting participants from the student community.			
Consultant Fees			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Description:			

Budget Category	LSTA	Cash Match & In-Kind	Total
Travel			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Description:			
Supplies/Materials			
Refreshable Braille Devices, with cases (42 total at \$525 per item)	\$22,050	\$0	\$22,050
Marketing Materials	\$1,000	\$0	\$1,000
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$23,050	\$0	\$23,050
Description: Supply costs include 42 "Orbit Reader 20" refreshable braille devices from the American Printing House for the Blind. Forty of these devices will be distributed to program participants, and two will be used by Braille Institute staff for training workshops. Supply costs also include \$1,000 for accessible marketing materials that will be distributed to Braille Institute students and patrons, as well as to community organizations who will assist us in identifying potential participants. These materials will include 1,000 braille fliers, braille bookmarks, and audio recordings. All marketing materials will also be recorded in audio format and distributed through our Telephone Reader Program.			

Budget Category	LSTA	Cash Match & In-Kind	Total
Equipment (\$5,000 or more per unit)			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Description:			
Services			
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0
Subtotal	\$0	\$0	\$0
Description:			

Project Total	\$23,050	\$12,820	\$35,870
Indirect Cost Rate Applied 10.0 % Indirect Cost	\$2,305	\$0	\$2,305
Check one: <input type="checkbox"/> No Indirect <input type="checkbox"/> Federally negotiated indirect cost rate * <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Indirect proposed cost rate * * please attach supporting documentation if required			
Description: Braille Institute is seeking 10% of the project total as an indirect cost in order to successfully integrate the "Braille Literacy for the Next Century" program into the operations of the organization. Overhead costs will include utility bills, photocopying, telephone and Internet charges, and bookkeeping.			
Grand Total	\$25,355	\$12,820	\$38,175

ELEMENT 7: ATTACHMENTS

If you have additional resources that support your grant, please attach after this page

ELEMENT 8: INTERNET CERTIFICATION

Check the Appropriate Library Type

☐ Public Library ☐ Academic ☐ K-12 ☐ Multi-Type ☒ Special/Other

As the duly authorized representative of the applicant public library, public elementary school library or public secondary school library applying for LSTA funding, I hereby certify that the library is (*check only one of the following boxes*)

A. ☐ **An individual applicant that is CIPA compliant.**

The applicant library, as a public library, a public elementary school library or public secondary school library, has complied with the requirements of Section 9134(f)(1) of the Library Services and Technology Act.

B. ☐ **Representing a group of applicants. Those applicants that are subject to CIPA requirements have certified they are CIPA compliant.**

All public libraries, public elementary school libraries, and public secondary school libraries, participating in the application have complied with the requirements of Section 9134(f)(1) of the Library Services and Technology Act. The library submitting this application has collected Internet Safety Certifications from all other applicants who are subject to CIPA requirements. The library will keep these certifications on file with other application materials, and if awarded funds, with other project records.

C. ☐ **Not Subject to CIPA Requirements.**

The CIPA requirements do not apply because no funds made available under this LSTA grant program will be used to purchase computers used to access the Internet or to pay for direct costs associated with accessing the Internet.

SIGNATURE

I have read and support this LSTA Grant Application.

Braille Institute Library
Library/Organization

Braille Literacy for the 21st Century
Project Name

Reed Strege
Library Director Name

Director of Library Services
Title

Library Director Signature

Date



Office of Special Programs

Student Services Village, Room 100

855 North Vermont Avenue

Los Angeles, CA 90029

Tel (323) 953-4000 ext. 2270

Fax (323) 953-4013

May 10, 2017

California State Library Services
Pitch-an-Idea

To whom it may concern,

We are pleased to support the refreshable braille displays project and will work with our partners at Braille Institute to promote the program to our community at Los Angeles City College. We currently have over 70 students in our program who are blind or have low vision. We will assist in identifying potential students who read braille but often do not have access to a low-cost refreshable braille reading device. I think this will be an invaluable service to our students, especially for in-class notetaking.

Our past co-sponsored trainings with Braille have been so successful that we welcome ways to continue our collaboration to find more ways to best serve our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donna Morley", is written over a horizontal line.

Donna Morley, M.S., LPCC
Learning Disabilities Specialist
Los Angeles City College
855 North Vermont Avenue
LA, CA 90029
323-953-4000, ext. 2276