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Spotlight on Literacy Grant Program

Application Page

Name of Library: Julia Davis branch of St. Louis Public Library

Federal Tax Id:

DUNS Number:

Address: 4415 Natural Bridge Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63115

Library Director: Marion Librarian

Email: marian@slpl.org

Phone: 314-999-9999

Project Director: Sherry Taylor

Email: sherry@slpl.org

Phone: 314-888-8888

Total population of library service area: 20,700

Project Title: Enabling Job Search Success by Bridging the Digital Divide

LSTA Funds Requested: \$8,815

Local Match: \$600 in-kind donation of speakers

Grant Narrative

The Julia Davis Branch of the St Louis Public Library (SLPL) system requests \$8,815 for a one-year grant to bridge the “digital divide” for the adult and older teen patrons in its north St. Louis neighborhood. This grant will promote “digital literacy” for adults and older teens funding programming which will include basic computer skills and online job search and application training.

The “digital divide” is defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.) as “the economic, educational, and social inequalities between those who have computers and online access and those who do not.’ Today the lack of computer and internet access greatly limits one’s ability to search for jobs, apply for jobs and thereby ultimately achieve employment. Access to the internet and having computer skill is critical when searching for a job in today’s economy. (Mrazek, 2018). Many companies no longer take paper applications, requiring applications to be done online with resumes uploaded. (Kang, 2016). More and more employers are using online companies, like Indeed, Monster, or ZipRecruiter to list their job openings. Additionally, some companies even require assessments to be performed online during the application and/or interview process. Even once employment is achieved, internet access and computer skills may be needed to complete employment forms, set work schedules, log hours, and ask for time off.

Data from the United States Census Bureau reveals a prominent digital divide in the City of St. Louis along what is called the Delmar Divide. (Krull, 2019). According to the 2013-2017 American Community Survey of the U.S. Census Bureau, 44% of households in the City of St. Louis north of Delmar have no internet access at all. This digital dividing line down Delmar Avenue reflects a socioeconomic and racial dividing line long the same avenue. (Harlan, 2014)

Taylor

The Julia Davis branch of the SLPL system sits on the “have-not” side of this digital divide along Delmar. Data from the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey shows that the Julia Davis branch serves some neighborhoods where greater than 41 percent of the population lack internet access and some neighborhoods where that number increases to 51% percent or more that lack internet access. (Krull, 2019). This puts the citizens living in the neighborhoods surrounding Julia Davis at a serious disadvantage when looking to find employment. Julia Davis would like to bridge the digital divide for its patrons by providing computer and internet access and providing training on basic computer skills, resume creation, and internet job searching for its adults and older teens.

The Julia Davis branch currently has a classroom with several computers that it can utilize for this proposed programming and also has two laptop computers that it can prioritize for job-search related uses for patrons. This grant would specifically fund the creation of programming which would assist patrons in achieving success in basic computer skills and job-search related tasks, such as basic computer literacy, basic word processing, setting up email accounts, resume and cover letter creation, online job searching, online application completion, and video interviewing. The plan is to run two programs per month, one focusing on basic computing skills and the second focusing on job search and application skills. Additionally, this grant would fund the training of community volunteers who would hold office hours to help patrons with basic computer skills and/or online job searching.

The total amount of the grant sought is: \$8,815. The expenses included in this grant application include:

- Salary of .25 FTE to create and implement programming and to train and supervise community volunteers (\$15 per hour x 10 hours per week x 50 weeks = \$7500);

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- Cost of a speaker for 6 separate dates on topics of resume and cover letter creation, online job search and application strategies and tips for video interviewing (\$600);
- Cost of background check on 5 volunteers (\$125)
- Costs of promotion of the programming through print flyers to patrons and community partners (\$100);
- Costs of printing materials for attendees for each program (\$10 x 24 programs= \$240);
- Cost of resume builder software program (\$50); and
- Costs of printer ink and resume quality paper for patrons needing access to computer to print documents necessary for job applications (\$200).

Grant Timeline

May 1, 2019	Grant start date.
May 2019	Recruit three to five community volunteers to staff job-search and basic computer skills help desk with the goal of establishing 3-5 two-hour slots per week.
May – August 2019	Implement two programs per month. With one program per month on basic computer skills and the second program focused on online job search and application tips.
June 2019	Train community volunteers, establish and promote volunteer help desk hours.
August 20, 2019	First interim grant report is due.
September – December 2019	Implement two programs per month. Again one focusing on computer skills (potentially expanding upon skills taught) and the second will continue to focus on online job search and applications (potentially adding resume and cover letter creation).
December 31, 2019	Second interim grant report is due.
January – May 28, 2020	Implement two programs per month. Following pattern of one on computer skills (increasing skills, if warranted) and the second on online job search tips (potentially adding job interviewing skills).
May 29, 2020	Final grant report is due.

Taylor

Collaboration

The Julia Davis branch will collaborate with the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE). SLATE's mission is to connect job seekers to training programs and employment, as well as to assist youth with career skills. SLATE's mission parallels the purpose for this grant. SLATE will provide us as an in-kind donation of speakers on relevant topics. Additionally, SLATE will publicize our program to their clients and also keep this branch current on local job fairs and new online job postings in St. Louis area pertinent to the neighborhoods surrounding the Julia Davis branch.

Project Promotion

For the general community, the Julia Davis branch will promote the computer and internet access, computer literacy, and the job search programming on its website, through its social media outlets, and through its email newsletters. However, because this program is attempting to reach those that are lacking internet access, some of the usual strategies, like promoting it on the SLPL website or through email newsletters will not be very effectual. So Julia Davis will also promote the programs on its facility bulletin boards and through outreach to various community partners, such as its neighborhood schools, the City of St. Louis (and specific departments, such as SLATE and Department of Social Services), the nonprofits located in north St. Louis that provide assistance in the form of job training or poverty relief, and businesses and possible employers in the service area of Julia Davis. Julia Davis will email and phone all possible community partners and also provide flyers to be posted at the locations of these community partners.

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Evaluation

Julia Davis will collect attendance for its programming, log office hour visits with its community volunteers, and also ask its patrons to indicate when a computer is being used for job search related purpose. Julia Davis will also provide a survey to all the participants who attend programs or use the volunteer help desk. The survey will include the following questions:

1. How did you learn about this program? Check all that apply.

- ___ At school (name which one_____)
- ___ A flyer (specify where posted_____)
- ___ At library (specify which branch _____)
- ___ Word of mouth
- ___ On the library's website
- ___ Other (please specify)

2. As a result of participating in this program:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I learned something new					
I am able to learn what I used					
I am more likely to apply for a job online					

3. How can this program be improved?
4. What other skills, knowledge, or tools do you need to be able to apply for jobs posted online?
5. What other skills, knowledge, or tools do you need to be able to match the skills required for a job you wish to have?

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