

2024 LORI Grant Programs

Application & Grant FAQ

Application & Allowable Expenses

What is the purpose of these grant programs?

LORI grants provide opportunities for forward-looking projects that support the advancement of library services in Rhode Island. These grant funds are not intended for simply purchasing supplies and materials. LORI Grants are programmatic and must address a specific community need, as well as one of the OLIS priorities of Access, Learning and Engagement and the library's long-range (strategic) plan. The grant proposal should include activities that will result in measurable outputs and outcomes and have an impact on library services. If the only activity in your proposal is purchasing supplies or equipment, then this may not be the right grant program for you. Learn more about current programs at the [LSTA Sub-grants page](#) at the OLIS website.

What is the difference between Project Grants and Mini-Grants?

The most obvious difference between the two programs is the amount of funds available per proposal. Project Grants are for larger projects between \$10,000 and \$27,500 while Mini-Grants are for projects between \$2,500 and \$7,500. Project grants will focus on a community need and may approach that need with a variety of activities. These projects will likely span the entire available grant window, should have multiple outputs and outcomes, and will require additional application questions and reporting requirements. Mini-Grants will also address a community need but may operate on a shorter timeline, include fewer, more targeted activities, and require a less intensive application and report.

What expenses are not eligible?

LSTA Funds cannot be used for capital expenditures/improvements or construction, prizes and incentives, entertainment (including food and alcohol), lobbying, or promotional campaigns. If you are unsure if something is allowable, please contact OLIS.

If promotional campaigns are not allowed, does that mean that we cannot promote the grant project?

LSTA funds cannot be used to promote libraries in general (think library branded swag, general campaigns about the library), however you can use LSTA funds to promote your LSTA funded-



project. For example, if a project includes a series of programs, you can use funds to promote those programs to the intended audience.

What makes a good proposal?

A good LORI grant proposal will address a specific community need, as well as goals from the library's long-range/strategic plan. The proposal will thoroughly answer all the included questions, including a plan for activities, intended outputs and outcomes, and a plan for measuring the impact of the project. A proposal should also be realistic to both the timeline of the program and the capacity of the library. Simple projects that address a community-specific need can be very impactful. Finally, all proposed purchases should be related to the project activities and be both necessary and reasonable to execute those activities.

How will my application be scored?

Applications will be scored by a team composed of OLIS staff members and outside reviewers. The review team will use a rubric to score the narrative components of your proposal. Special attention will be paid to whether your proposal expresses a clear community need, if the proposed activities are relevant to address that community need, if the library has demonstrated the appropriate capacity to execute the project, if the library has a sound plan for measuring the impact of the project, and if the budget requests are reasonable and necessary to complete the proposed project.

Can we request technology for the library, like we did for ARPA?

Yes and no. Technology remains an eligible expense under the goals of the LORI Grant program, however simply purchasing technology such as laptops, computers or similar is not enough to constitute a project. Technology purchases must be necessary and reasonable for the execution of the proposed project, with accompanying activities that will result in measurable outputs and outcomes. If you are unsure if what you have in mind is allowable, please contact OLIS.

Can we request to purchase furniture?

Furniture is generally not allowed unless it is necessary and reasonable for the execution of a project. Purchasing furniture to replace existing library furniture or make general improvements to the library is not allowed. If the library requires specific items to execute grant activities, then may be allowed. If you are unsure if what you have in mind is allowable, please contact OLIS.

How do I know if something is a capital expenditure?

["Capital expenditures"](#) means expenditures to acquire capital assets or expenditures to make additions, improvements, modifications, replacements, rearrangements, reinstallations, renovations, or alterations to capital assets (buildings, land) that materially increase their value or



useful life. Ask yourself a few questions about what you are hoping to do: Is it temporary? Is it portable? Could it reasonably be executed by library staff (as opposed to requiring additional expertise to “install”)? If the answer to any of those questions is no, then the item or service is likely not allowable. For example, a pop-up greenhouse or pre-fab garden box might be allowed while landscaping service to change a lawn into a garden is likely not. If you are unsure if what you have in mind is allowable, please contact OLIS.

What is the difference between supplies and equipment?

The equipment category should only be used for a single item costing over \$5,000. Ten computers purchased at \$600 for a total of \$6,000 is not considered equipment; an expenditure like that should be categorized under supplies. A large Promethean smart board costing \$5850 would be considered equipment. OLIS must get prior approval from IMLS for all equipment requests.

How detailed does the proposed budget need to be?

Your proposed budget should provide a high-level overview with enough detail to understand what the library will be purchasing and how it relates to the project activities. The application does not need to include item-specific details like make and model, nor does it need to include price quotes, links or similar. A statement like “laptop computers” does not provide adequate detail, while a statement like, “Ten Dell XPS 12 Laptops with 12th Gen Intel Core i7-1250U” is more detail than is strictly necessary. A statement like, “ten laptop computers for use in senior digital navigator program,” provides enough information for the application review team to understand what you will buy and why.

Grant Management, eCivis, and Finances

Who should I contact if I am having difficulty logging into eCivis?

While OLIS can help troubleshoot certain basic issues in eCivis and questions specific to OLIS grant programs, if you are having difficulty logging in or other technical issues, contact the RI Grants Management Office through their [User Support Portal](#).

Who will receive the funds from this award?

This depends on the library’s situation. You may elect to receive payment directly to the library or engage a fiscal agent/payee such as your municipality, friends’ group or foundation. Whatever entity you select must have a Unified Entity Identifier (SAM) aka a UEI to be eligible to receive federal funds; this entity must also be registered in the [Ocean State Procures portal](#) so that the State of RI can issue payment. If you are using a fiscal agent/payee that has received a LORI grant or ARPA grant in the past, then they almost certainly meet both criteria. If you would like to get paid through a new or different entity, please contact OLIS for more information.



What is the Annual Organization Registration and does my library need to complete it?

The Annual Organization Registration is the annual registration with the State of RI's eCivis system and is required for organizations to receive a subgrant from a state agency. This is an annual renewal, so if you received a grant from OLIS in 2023, your annual registration is not expired yet and you do not need to do anything for this grant cycle. If you are receiving a grant through eCivis for the first time, the ***entity receiving the payment*** must complete this registration once per year.

Can I add team members to my grant application?

No, only one person/account can work on an application in eCivis. If your proposal is accepted for funding, the applicant will receive an award package from OLIS that must be completed to finalize the award. Upon finalizing the award, the original applicant will have access to the grant management screen, where the "Manage Grant Team" feature is available for the addition of as many team members as appropriate.

Can the library submit more than one application?

Yes, if your library has two disparate project ideas that fit the criteria of the program, you may submit two applications. Libraries may also submit applications for both Project and Mini-Grants if they have projects in mind for both.

How will I request funds?

Libraries will request funds through the eCivis GMS via the Financial Report Feature, and by checking off the "This is a reimbursement request" option. The library will fill out the budget charts and narrative and provide accompanying documentation with each report.

How often can I request funds?

Funds can be requested throughout the project for reimbursement of purchases and/or in anticipation of purchases to be made within 30 days of the request. Libraries can request funds up to once per month. All funds must be requested by August 16, 2024.

Can I request funds before I have made purchases?

Yes, funds can be requested throughout the project for both reimbursement of purchases and/or in anticipation of purchases to be made within 30 days of the request. If your library has any concerns about this, please contact OLIS.

What do I do if I need to change my project activities or proposed budget?

If circumstances arise that necessitate substantive changes to your project activities or changes to the budget (especially shifts in budget categories), you can submit an Amendment Request



directly through eCivis. You may request changes to your activities, and to your budget, though you may not request additional funds. For small changes, like changes in an item's brand or model, small shifts in quantity, or changes in anticipated costs, you do not have to file an amendment.

What kind of reporting will I need to do?

All reports will be managed through eCivis and will include financial reports, a brief interim activity report, and a more in-depth final report due by the mid-September 2024. There is also a final closeout financial report in eCivis that will be completed after all other reports have been submitted and accepted to officially close the grant.

Important Dates

- Application period: November 2023 – December 22, 2023
- Notification of award: January 12, 2024
- Project period begins: contract execution but no later than February 1, 2024
- Final date to request drawdown of grant funds: August 16, 2024
- Project conclusion: August 16, 2024
- Deadline for final grant report: September 20, 2024

Contact

For additional questions about LORI grant applications contact Nicolette Baffoni (nicolette.baffoni@olis.ri.gov) or [schedule an appointment](#).

For questions about digitization projects, contact Pablo Morales Henry (pablo.moraleshenry@olis.ri.gov).

