Public Library Construction Projects Information

March 2022

There are a few opportunities for public library construction funds coming in the near future. The U.S. Treasury Department has funding available to all states via the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund. This possible funding will be determined by the Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA). The American Library Association (ALA) will be offering funds that can be used for elevators, ramps, or other needs for creating accessible access to library services. There is also potential federal funding that the Maine State Library is learning more about. The MSL would like to learn more about the current need for funding public library construction projects. Your answers to the questions below will help us determine the level of funding needed as well as provide you the information about your library's eligibility for some construction funds. There are also possibilities in other federal funding from U.S. Senate and House through District Directed Funding.

1. U.S. Treasury Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund for States, Territories & Freely Associated States
[Download the entire Guidance document.](#)

Excerpts to note regarding library construction projects
The State of Maine is actively working on its plan to submit to the U.S. Department of the Treasury for Treasury's Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund. This Fund is making up to $128,xxx,xxx available to the state. The money will be administered by the Maine Connectivity Authority, which was set up by Governor Mills in order to manage this funding and to generally promote access to affordable broadband across Maine, along with related digital equity initiatives. While we anticipate the majority of Maine's funding will be earmarked for broadband infrastructure projects, we have an opportunity to advocate for funding for library capital construction projects.

This document will give you an overview of what the program is, eligibility criteria, program priorities, and other things to keep in mind as you:

- Review a capital project you already have planned, or
- If you are ready to consider a new plan specific for these funds.

We will refer to specific pages in the Guidance document provided by the Treasury for more detailed information.

ELIGIBILITY (See page 3 of the Treasury Guidance for details

For a Capital Project to be an eligible use of Capital Projects Fund grant funds, it must meet **all of the following criteria:**

1. The Capital Project invests in capital assets designed to directly enable work, education, **and** health monitoring.

2. The Capital Project is designed to address a critical need that resulted from or was made apparent or exacerbated by the COVID-19 public health emergency.

3. The Capital Project is designed to address a critical need of the community to be served by it.

What does this mean?

1. The project you plan must enhance services you provide or want to provide for your patrons related to job training or job seeking (work); lifelong learning, distance learning, or college and career readiness (education); and also access to health information or telehealth services (health monitoring). Digital literacy and skills programs check all the boxes as they relate to advancing work, education, and health monitoring opportunities for your patrons.

2. These funds are targeted to offset some of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to remember that:
   a. You KNOW the pandemic made it clear that there are likely many people in your community who do not have access to affordable internet, a device, and/or the skills to use it, and
   b. They depend on your library to be successful online.

3. There is a lot of flexibility in how you interpret what critical need(s) your project can address. However, you will need to be prepared to provide a sound argument for how you identified the need(s) and why the one(s) you choose to focus on for your project are critical to address. In other words, how will funding your project alleviate the need(s), and what impact do you anticipate this project having in your community? How do you know?

NOTE: If you need to rearrange your meeting room, upgrade your facility to be ADA compliant, or build an addition to support more workforce, education, and healthcare programs (including digital skills), you can make the case that any of these projects meet all three criteria.

WHAT BUCKET OF FUNDING ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?
Treasury has created three eligible types of projects for states:
   1. Broadband Infrastructure projects
   2. Digital Connectivity projects
   3. Multi-purpose Community Facility projects
Library construction is covered **only** in the *Multi-Purpose Community Facility Projects* **(see page 6).**

The key to remember as you look at your project plan is "multi-purpose." Projects to construct or improve buildings that are designed to jointly and directly enable work, education, and health monitoring are eligible for funding under the Capital Projects Fund program.

If construction funds become available, MSL will hold a meeting to provide further guidance. Please take the time to read through the guidance document for this funding.

2. Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities

Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Communities will offer more than $7 million in grants to small and rural libraries to increase the accessibility of facilities, services, and programs to better serve people with disabilities.

Beginning in late 2022, ALA will accept applications for grants to be distributed over the next three years ranging from $10,000 to $20,000. To be alerted about the application opening date, sign up to receive ALA's Programming Librarian e-newsletter.

Participating libraries will first conduct community input-gathering sessions to assure that their work aligns with local needs. Libraries will be required to identify the primary audience they are hoping to reach (e.g., homebound seniors, children with autism, Deaf community members) and facilitate a community conversation with the impacted populations in order to guide improvement of the library's services. Grantees would then use the funds to create services or improve their facilities based on the needs identified by their audience.

3. Request for District Directed Funding.

These would be funds requested by Maine Senate and House Representatives for Maine public libraries. It is likely we will have to demonstrate that needs have not been met by these other programs described above.

Please take our survey – Public Library Construction Projects