

**Pacific Library Partnership
Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program**

Due Wednesday, October 31, 2012

Please provide the following information in a Microsoft Word document. Send the completed form to Linda Crowe, PLP Executive Director, 2471 Flores Street, San Mateo, CA 94403 or email crowe@plsinfo.org.

1. Title of Project Easy Access Collections

2. Library/Committee applying for funding San Mateo County Library
Name Sandy Wee
Email wee@smcl.org
Mailing Address 125 Lessingia Court, San Mateo, CA 94402

3. Amount of funding requested \$15,000

PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program

1. One paragraph project summary.

San Mateo County Library (SMCL) is working on an innovative project to change the organization of its nonfiction print collections to a word-based classification system. The word-based classification system will be based on the BISAC (Book Industry Standards and Communications) system that is used in bookstores. The system will enhance the library subject headings already in use and replace Dewey Decimal System call numbers with words and phrases based on language easily identified by the public. We plan to pilot the new system at three libraries initially, developing new signage, converting existing collections, training our staff, and promoting the change to the community. SMCL would be the first PLP library to implement a word-based classification system, and this exciting project will ultimately benefit libraries throughout the state.

2. Explain how this project fits with the library's strategic directions.

One of San Mateo County Library's strategic goals is that our branches be "Destination Libraries" which "create welcoming spaces that promote a sense of community pride and facilitate customer centered services." Moving to a word-based classification system fits within that goal; as a result, one of our strategic initiatives for this year is to "promote self-sufficiency, discovery and overall satisfaction by arranging and presenting easily accessible library collections."

In 2009, *Library Journal* surveyed librarians and found that 66% thought their patrons "felt intimidated by a classification system they don't understand very well," and that 63% thought that patrons "want to go straight to the right shelf without having to look anything up." We see evidence of this in our branches when patrons feel "silly" for having to ask for help finding what they want. Our patrons need and want to be able to access library resources intuitively and independently. They want to be able to browse, discover and help themselves to our diverse collections. Word-based classification systems at other libraries, particularly the Anythink libraries in Colorado, have been successful in increasing circulation, self-sufficiency, and, most importantly, patron satisfaction. These results fit into SMCL's mission to "provide innovative, dynamic services that connect our diverse community with opportunities for individual growth and enrichment."

3. A description of the proposed project including the population served and the demographics of that population.

This project will convert our nonfiction print collections from the Dewey Decimal Classification System to a word-based classification system. We plan to pilot the new system at three libraries initially (Portola Valley, Woodside and San Carlos), by developing new signage, updating shelving plans, training our staff, and promoting the change to the community.

PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program

The Portola Valley Library will be the first branch in this project to convert its nonfiction print collections from the Dewey Decimal System to a new word-based classification system. Portola Valley is an affluent community of 4,400 people, tucked away in wooded, hilly area west of Stanford University. The small library enjoys strong community support, having moved into a new LEED Platinum building in 2008, and we believe that this community will quickly embrace the change to a word-based classification system. The size, existing building, and furniture are an excellent match for this project and will easily support the reorganization and marketing of the collection.

The Woodside Library is just north of Portola Valley and is very similar in size and community demographics. San Carlos is a city of over 28,000 people and is more economically diverse than Woodside or Portola Valley. The San Carlos Library is our second largest branch in terms of circulation and collections. The Woodside and San Carlos branches are the logical next steps in the conversion to a word-based classification system, as both branches have remodel projects planned for 2013.

Developing new signage and updating our shelving plans for our collections is critical to this project. Attractive, professionally-designed signs with language that matches our word-based classification system will work to help patrons find what they came for, while also enticing them to browse in areas they hadn't planned to visit. New shelving plans will help make space for marketing the collection consistently and collocating subjects.

Promoting this change will be an important part of this project. In addition to training our staff on the changes this will have on their day-to-day work, we will need to turn our staff members into ambassadors for the word-based classification system. We plan to bring in a library expert who has worked with word-based classification systems successfully to inspire our staff to embrace the project and promote it to our patrons. We want our patrons to be delighted by this change, so we plan to educate the public in advance through a variety of channels, obtain buy-in from our stakeholders, and build up excitement in preparation for the new classification system.

There are a small number of libraries nationwide which have successfully adopted word-based classification systems, and as project pioneers for our region, an important step in the process will be evaluating our effectiveness and sharing SMCL's experiences and results with the larger library community. We believe this project, with the goal of eventual system-wide implementation within SMCL, is an opportunity to present an innovative new model that will inspire libraries across California and beyond to respond to the public's desire for easy access to library collections.

4. The goals and objectives of the project.

Project Goal:

The Portola Valley, Woodside and San Carlos Libraries will be welcoming spaces that promote self-service and facilitate patron discovery and satisfaction. SMCL will organize its nonfiction print collections in an innovative, intuitive, and user-friendly way that encourages browsing and discovery, and that will ultimately result in increased use of our collections.

Project Objectives:

- To complete a new translation key in order to change our collections and cataloging for print nonfiction from the Dewey Decimal System to a word-based classification system based on BISAC.
- To develop new signage that will make it easy for patrons to browse our collections and find specific titles.
- To train staff to understand, champion and maintain the new classification system.
- To promote the new classification system in our communities so that patrons embrace the change.
- To pilot the new system at the Portola Valley, Woodside and San Carlos Libraries.
- To share the results of the project with the library community at large.

5. The project timeline (activities).

Since Spring of 2011, San Mateo County Library staff have been working to develop a word-based classification system based on BISAC (Book Industry Standards and Communications).

Moving forward, we plan to:

1. Weed the Portola Valley Library nonfiction print collections by December 2012.
2. Complete subject headings and translation codes for the new system by mid-January 2013; vendors will have information by mid-January 2013.
3. Conduct a pre-conversion survey of patrons.
4. Develop and implement a plan to educate the public prior to conversion by the end of January 2013 by:
 - a. Creating an online video promoting word-based classification;
 - b. Presenting on the project to Friends of the Portola Valley Library, Portola Valley Town Council, and other groups; and,
 - c. Writing press releases and blogs for SMCL.org on the project.
5. Create a professionally-designed signage package by the end of January 2013.
6. Determine shelving space needed and develop shelving plan for Portola Valley. Explore furniture and display needs by mid-February 2013.
7. Generate promotional materials by the end of February 2013.
8. Create FAQs and talking points for staff by the end of February 2013.
9. Bring in a library expert to train Portola Valley, Woodside and San Carlos staff on working with a word-based classification system by mid-March 2013.

10. Purchase sign holders and a high-quality color printer for the Portola Valley Library to aid in producing top-of-range and shelf signage by the end of March 2013.
11. Plan and implement physical conversion of Portola Valley Library nonfiction print collection by March 24, 2013.
12. Hold training at SMCL Staff Development Day for all staff members, led by Portola Valley staff members, by May 2013.
13. Conduct a post-conversion survey of patrons in Portola Valley by the end of May 2013.
14. Gather project team and Portola Valley staff to review the process by the end of May 2013, and adjust above timelines and plans as needed in order to implement at the Woodside and San Carlos Libraries, in conjunction with their respective remodel projects.
15. Share the success of the project with the library community at large through articles, conference presentations and other professional outlets.

6. The evaluation of the project.

We will use the following to measure the success of the project:

1. Administer pre- and post-conversion surveys of patrons asking about:
 - a. Their experience browsing,
 - b. The amount of time they spent looking for specific materials, and
 - c. Whether or not they needed to ask staff for assistance.
2. Comments by staff and patrons regarding the change in organizing the collection, submitted verbally and through our Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire.
3. CollectionHQ, our collection development and management tool, will measure circulation performance of individual sections before and after conversion.

7. The project budget.

Easy Access Collections Budget	
SIGNAGE PACKAGE	
Professional graphic design support	\$2,000
Top of Range Sign Holders (32 at \$125 each)	\$4,000
Shelf Sign Holders (50 at \$100 each)	\$5,000
PRINTER	
HD Color Laser Printer	\$3,000
PR	
Promotional materials	\$1,000
Total Budget	
	\$15,000

