

PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program

1. One paragraph project summary.

The proposed project, "Librarians Unleashed" will utilize wireless technology with Wi-Fi enabled iPads (or similar tablets) and wireless barcode scanners to allow staff to help users anywhere in the library facility with questions, checkout, and library card issues or registration. Along with a Wi-Fi enabled hotspot, iPads/tablets and wireless barcode scanners can be taken to public meetings, schools and outreach events, bringing the library to the people. The project will enable staff to deliver point of contact service in the "stacks" and into the community on the streets, thus improving the delivery and quality of services to the patrons. In addition, the project will streamline work efficiency by enabling staff to inventory the collection right where items are shelved rather than having to transport them to a physical workstation elsewhere in the library facility, a time-consuming and labor-intensive process.

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

Monterey County Free Libraries (MCFL's) mission is "*to bring ideas, inspiration, information and enjoyment to our community.*" The proposed project will allow MCFL to deliver services to the patrons without always requiring the patrons to come to the library or to the reference/circulation desk. The project will provide patrons access to new technologies and innovation, fulfilling an integral part of MCFL's mission. The project will allow MCFL to reach users without the limitations of being tied to library computers or the circulation desk, thus allowing for more engagement and interaction with patrons and the community.

The goals in MCFL's strategic plan can be categorized into four main areas:

- Equity in serving the needs of all residents of Monterey County by balancing resources with needs, and offering the most effective and efficient delivery method to each of our communities.
- Policies and long-range plans that support our commitment to fiscal responsibility and effective and fair use of staff, facilities and collections.
- An organization that is decisive and able to quickly respond to community needs.
- A well-trained, learning organization that serves the County with efficiency, accuracy, and with highly skilled staff.

This project fits with the library's strategic directions in the following major ways:

- The wireless technology enables the library to provide point of contact service where it is needed in the library branches and also bring services into the communities throughout the county.
- Delivery of services through mobile technology at outreach events is an effective and efficient method of serving each of our communities.
- There is a two-pronged benefit of this project. First, the technology enables the library to benefit the community by providing mobile access to multiple library resources, including electronic resources such as databases. Second, the technology enables staff to work more efficiently, thus fulfilling the library's commitment to be fiscally responsible in its use of resources.
- The availability of mobile wireless technology enables the library to respond quickly to community needs.
- The project allows for staff to learn and utilize current technology to serve the changing needs of the community which continuously calls for updated technology to keep pace with community needs and interests.

In all of these important ways the project fits with the commitment of the library's strategic directives by providing quality service to all, responsive and sustainable programs, effective and responsible use of resources and professional excellence.

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

MCFL serves a population of over 223,000 people spread out over 3,150 square miles through its 17 branches and 3 bookmobiles. Currently 15 branches are open and one is scheduled to reopen in early 2018. The service population is culturally diverse, speaking a variety of languages and spanning a wide age range. The population throughout the service area is also socio-economically diverse, however between one quarter to one third of the demographic we serve live below the poverty level in rural areas in both the northern and southern part of the county. The majority of our branches serve areas where between 70-95% of school children qualify for free and reduced lunch. Residents in these communities are often isolated because of distances and a lack of private and public transportation. Libraries act as a community center, internet access center and as a resource center connecting residents with other resources in the county.

The essence of the Librarians Unleashed project is to cut the tether from the desk and put library staff on the floor, in the stacks helping patrons while shelving, tidying the library or creating displays and providing "roaming reference." Using Wi-Fi enabled iPads/tablets along with wireless barcode scanners permits staff to deliver point of contact services rather than walking back to the desk with the patron, thus improving customer service. Library staff would carry the iPad in a comfortable carrying case with the wireless barcode scanner attached. Another advantage of using the Wi-Fi enabled

equipment is that it facilitates our ability to efficiently inventory the collection with ergonomics in mind. Inventory can be a labor intensive and time consuming process.

MCFL has access to LEAP technology through our Polaris ILS. LEAP enables us to access our ILS through a URL in the cloud with Wi-Fi enabled devices. We have access to the technology, but not the infrastructure to connect. The addition of iPads/tablets and wireless, Bluetooth enabled 2D barcode scanners will link the infrastructure to the technology and help us ramp up our services both in our facilities and in our communities

The greatest hope of the Librarians Unleashed project is to extend the lifeline of library services into the community. MCFL staff actively participates in community outreach events throughout the county. We visit school open houses and participate in community business and government meetings. Rather than just talking about our resources and technology at all these events we can demonstrate them. We can collaborate with local schools and participate in student registration day, signing students up for library cards on the spot with access to the school Wi-Fi. We can register patrons at community events and make sure all the people we interact with get a library card during library card sign-up month. We will avail ourselves of Wi-Fi in the community when available or use a Wi-Fi enabled hotspot when Wi-Fi is not available.

MCFL is increasing our presence in the communities in order to respond to community needs and keep us relevant. This project helps us do that.

4. Goals and objectives of the project.

The main objective of the project is to provide information to patrons, enable mobile checkout, and register library cards throughout the library facility, at public meetings, and at outreach events using wireless mobile technology. An additional goal is for staff to use the technology to inventory the collection where the items are shelved making the inventory process more ergonomic and efficient.

The project will meet the following major objectives:

- Use current technology to engage users in innovative ways, keeping library services and resources relevant
- Takes services to patrons and increases interactions between staff and patrons in the stacks and on the streets by giving staff tools to get out from behind the circulation desk.
- Highlights staff expertise, skills and knowledge of useful and relevant resources while enhancing customer service.
- Expands our ability to deliver information to the next generation of users in schools during class visits and programs by demonstrating the link between library resources and information students need to complete assignments or conduct research.

5. Project timeline (activities).

1. Create an implementation plan	November 2017
a. How to configuring iPads/Tablets	
b. Outline a staff training plan	
2. Order equipment	November 2017
3. Create staff instructions for use of equipment	November 2017
4. Receive and configure equipment	December 2017
4. Demonstrate equipment use and train branch staff	January 2018
5. Begin using the equipment	February 2018
a. In branches	
b. At public meetings	
c. At community events	

6. Evaluation of the project.

Project managers will develop an outcomes-based survey for staff to see if, and how, this technology helps them with their jobs and how it helps them improve customer services.

Surveys will also be designed for branch managers to give observations of if and how the technology is changing staff behavior and how it contributes to the efficiency of branch operations.

We can also gather statistical data from the ILS to see how many library cards were created and other services delivered using wireless access through Polaris' LEAP.

7. Project budget.

16 iPad Wi-Fi 32 gig (or similar tablet) + tax	16 x \$360	= \$5,760.00
16 tablet carrying cases + tax & shipping	16 x \$35	= \$ 560.00
16 wireless barcode scanners + tax & shipping	16 x \$485	= \$7,760.00
1 Verizon Wi-Fi hotspot (MiFi) device + tax	1 x \$20	= \$ 20.00
Verizon service plan for 1 year	12 months x \$45	= \$ 540.00
1 ATT Velocity Wi-Fi hotspot device	1 x \$15	= \$ 15.00
ATT service plan for 1 year	12 months x \$50	= \$ 600.00
Total		\$15 255.00

8. Sustainability analysis



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After the initial purchase of the equipment the project will be sustainable as no periodic maintenance costs are anticipated. MCFL will absorb the \$1,140 cost for the annual service plan for the Wi-Fi hotspots into the technology budget.