

**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 Play@YourLibrary: a virtual incentive platform for libraries
2. Library applying for funding: Oakland Public Library
Name: Jamie Turbak
Email: jturbak@oaklandlibrary.org
Mailing Address: 125 14th Street, Oakland Ca 94612
3. Amount of funding requested \$15,000.00

PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program

1. One paragraph project summary.

A customizable, virtual system will be developed allowing Oakland Public Library (OPL) to be a pilot site for electronically managed incentive programs for patrons. The software platform will allow patrons to self-register for an incentive program, track the participation of the patron and provide reporting and notification modules to library staff. Either from a website or app, patrons will be authenticated through an ILS system and can interact with the system anytime.

The Oakland Public Library will create a working group with input from other BALIS libraries and CLA's Program Director, to create a Scope of Work that will define a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a consultant to create a Requirements Document and final product called "Play@YourLibrary". Play@YourLibrary will be a flexible and customizable platform for incentive programs such as Summer Reading, Read Down Your Fines, etc., that responds to today's users of different ages and abilities, as well as the library's need for data collection and user privacy. As the development of Play@YourLibrary progresses, Oakland Public Library will demonstrate the product and facilitate adoption to interested BALIS libraries.

This grant request for \$15,000 will be combined with BALIS funds already awarded for the same project to meet the full project budget estimated at \$97,500.

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

OPL's current strategic plan identifies six service priorities in light of severely constrained funding, one of which is a focus on services to youth to address the need for support for academic success and literacy skills for lifelong learning.

Additional strategic goals relate to employing technology to improve services to patrons and taking steps to position OPL for the future.

Library customers find it easy to use the library independently: New Library technology provides opportunities for improving service, especially promoting effective independent use of the library by patrons."

New customer needs are identified and service opportunities "captured" for implementation when healthier budgets are restored: While the library is challenged to consolidate at this time, it must position itself for a brighter future by continuing to review the library service needs of its communities, and identifying operations and technologies to enhance service and provide operational efficiencies.

Play@YourLibrary addresses these areas by making incentive-based programs for library participation and reading accessible through today's technology.

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

Public libraries offer summer reading incentive programs to encourage youth to read for enjoyment and pleasure. The goal of OPL's Summer Reading Program is to help keep children's literacy levels up during the summer and prevent reading skills "slippage" by encouraging reading and library use during the non-school months. Application of technology to the Summer Reading Program makes it more relevant, engaging for children and families and efficient for staff.

Most libraries have moved from "index card" registration for Summer Reading games to online systems that make the programs accessible to youth and families in new ways and expand access by being available in homes and partner sites, as well as in the library. An online system has the potential to free up library staff from time-consuming tasks and to improve program efficiency by having program statistics instantly available. For example, an online solution makes it much easier for a child to participate in the program and claim reading prizes at multiple branch libraries.

Currently, there are only a few products on the market that provide full-service online options, and their interfaces are not child friendly, or interactive. Most BALIS libraries use Evanced's "Summer Reader." In 2012, OPL piloted "Summer Reader" software from Evanced for participant registration and data collection. Based on OPL's experience and feedback from other California libraries, there is a need for a solution that will offer a suitable patron interface and more efficient functionality for library staff. Because many California public libraries participate in the CLA Summer Reading collaborative, a collaborative solution for online summer reading software is a cost-effective approach.

Another limitation with Evanced's "Summer Reader" product is the inability to track different activities within one game. For instance, OPL's Child Summer Reading game tracks reading participation, whereas, our Teen Summer Reading game tracks activity like visits to museums or volunteering or attending a program. Play@YourLibrary will be customizable by the library so that many different methods of participation can be counted and rewarded. This could include incentives for check-outs, volunteering, library visits, reading, attending programs, survey participation, etc. Play@YourLibrary will provide easy reporting and notification to library staff as well as "account" tracking for patrons. Incentives might be prizes or entries into drawings, but could also be non-monetary rewards like a "congratulatory" email or a virtual token.

Libraries with the resources have developed their own alternatives for Summer Reading software (for instance, the New York Public libraries), and there are models for other online "registration" software that are child friendly (for instance, DIY.org). Modeling loyalty programs, libraries can open the box in thinking about how best to connect users of all ages with library services through online incentive programs. There is currently a proliferation of apps that allow adults to participate and track goals and activities, such

as Mint.com (personal finance), Loseit.com (weight loss) and MapMyRIDE (cycling). Play@YourLibrary will mimic some of these services by allowing patrons to track library participation in any activity that the library wants to encourage and reward.

Recently, PLA was awarded an IMLS grant to develop a prototype Summer Reading app:

http://www.ims.gov/ims_awards_50000_to_the_public_library_association_to_prototype_a_summer_reading_app.aspx. Though similar in concept, OPL proposes development of a requirements document along the same timeline as the PLA app development, for software that could be broader based in application than just Summer Reading, and not necessarily solely in app format. Although Play@YourLibrary will track multiple activities for all ages, it will be developed with CLAs goals for Summer Reading particularly in mind, as well as the needs of urban Bay Area communities.

OPL's children's services supervisor, Nina Lindsay, has worked with CLA's Summer Reading program director, Natalie Cole, on several projects related to summer learning, and the two have previously discussed development of such software. Cole has indicated support of this proposal. She is also advising PLA on their IMLS grant. Development of the Play@YourLibrary requirements document would involve a working group with representatives from 2 other BALIS libraries (early interest has been expressed by several) and Cole; and towards completion would involve reaching out to PLA to consider alignment with and divergences from their app, before moving forward.

OPL serves the diverse population of 411,000 in Oakland, Emeryville and Piedmont . The OPL consists of a Main Library, 16 neighborhood branch libraries (including two specialty-language branches, Asian and Cesar Chavez), an adult literacy program, and the African-American Museum and Library at Oakland. Oakland's newest branch, the 81st Avenue Library, opened on January 29, 2011, and has fast become a hub of activity for the East Oakland community. The OPL's mission is to "inform, inspire, and delight our diverse community as a resource for information, knowledge, and artistic and literary expression, providing the best in traditional services, new technologies, and innovative programs."

The City of Oakland is ethnically and culturally diverse (27.3% Black or African American, 25.9% White, 25.4% Hispanic or Latino, 16.7% Asian, 4.7% other). More than 28% of Oakland residents are foreign-born; 40% speak a language other than English at home; and 19% of residents (29% of those under 18 years old) live below the poverty level. Research shows that early reading proficiency is a primary indicator of a child's future academic success. In Oakland, according to the 2011 California State Test results, 42% of Oakland public school third grade students read proficiently, compared with 53% of their peers in Alameda County.

6. The evaluation of the project.

At the conclusion of the grant period, the project will be evaluated to determine if the product meets the needs of BALIS and other California libraries.

Outcome measures:

1) Play@YourLibrary must meet the needs of Oakland Public Library patrons, as well as of Oakland Public Library staff and administrators for efficient program management.

- OPL will obtain qualitative data gathered from community survey or other methods
- OPL will obtain qualitative data gathered from staff surveys

2) Oakland Public Library is committed to developing a product that other BALIS libraries can use.

- OPL will provide information and documentation to facilitate the adoption of Play@YourLibrary at other BALIS libraries.

3) Play@YourLibrary will support CLA's Summer Reading Program.

- Working with the CLA Summer Reading Program Director, OPL will obtain qualitative data through surveys and other means to assess statewide interest in such a product.
- OPL will track the number of BALIS and California libraries that adopt the software at the end of the next 2 years.

7. The project budget.

| Item | PLP Grant | BALIS Grant | Local In-Kind | Total |
|---|-----------|-------------|---------------|----------|
| OPL staff salaries | | | \$15,000 | \$15,000 |
| Workgroup Expenses (advisors, travel, food, printing) | | | \$5,000 | \$5,000 |
| RFP Advertising | | | \$1,000 | \$1,000 |
| Consultant fees for Requirements Document and Product Development | \$15,000 | \$53,500 | \$1,500 | \$70,000 |
| Community survey materials and incentives | | | \$500 | \$500 |
| Marketing Materials for Product Launch | | | \$2,000 | \$2,000 |
| Conference Attendance to Demonstrate Product | | | \$4,000 | \$4,000 |
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| Totals | \$15,000 | \$53,500 | \$29,000 | \$97,500 |