

PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program

1. One paragraph project summary.

This project will make it possible for people who are blind or visually impaired to more independently use all of the resources of San Francisco's Main Library. Individuals will check out for use within the building wearable devices / smart glasses, such as Google Glass or Vuzix along with iPod Touch devices through which they will connect with trained navigation agents. Those agents, who use an augmented reality dashboard that allows them to see what the blind person sees in real time, will serve as visual interpreters to help library users find their way throughout the building, read print in the environment, and enjoy activities such as participating in crafts programs and exploring library exhibitions.

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

The "Aira Navigation" project would support SFPL's Service Excellence Core Values, which are paraphrased here to describe this specific initiative: delivering the highest possible service to individuals; ensuring free and equal access to resources, collections, information and programs; supporting our community through the creation of innovative services; and, promoting an inclusive environment that reflects the people of San Francisco.

This project supports three of seven goals in the SFPL Strategic Plan:

- Goal 1: Develop a patron-focused service model.
- Goal 2: Provide accessible and welcoming library facilities to meet the needs of all San Franciscans.
- Goal 6: Develop strong community partnerships to promote and support civic engagement.

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

SFPL will: acquire adaptive technology; establish a seat license plan with Aira, for 2 concurrent users; reach out to the Blind Community through the SFPL Library for the Blind and Print Disabled and the Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired; offer basic training to use the devices and service; and, check out devices for use within the Main Library.

18,259 adults aged 18+ in the City and County of San Francisco have vision impairments. They represent every socioeconomic, racial and ethnic community. Source: The "Demographic Profile" section in an *Assessment of the Needs of San Francisco Seniors and Adults with Disabilities*, published by the San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services, March 16, 2016.

4. Goals and objectives of the project.

San Francisco Public Library's Main Library is a large and complex building. On 7 floors with very large and complicated footprints, it houses 19 public service desks (including information and subject specialty desks, paging desks and borrower services stations), 6 meeting rooms and 8 rooms with adaptive technology that may be used by people who are blind or have low vision.

The primary goal of the project is to make it possible for library users who are blind or have vision impairments as well as a blind staff member to independently use and enjoy the resources of the entire Main Library. At this point, those individuals spend most of their time in the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (LBDP). When they venture out to use resources in various subject departments or go to programs, LBDP staff members often accompany them and either stay with them or calculate when to return to help them find their way back to the LBDP.

To our knowledge, this service is not currently used in any other library. People who are blind live in all of our communities, so if this is successful, other PLP libraries may want to establish service plans for use of this technology in their facilities. It is a service that would especially benefit other California libraries that members of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped of the Library of Congress. NLS regional and sub-regional libraries in California are: the Braille and Talking Book Library in the California State Library, the Braille Institute Library in Los Angeles, the Talking Book Library for the Blind of the Fresno County Public Library and SFPL's Library for the Blind and Print Disabled.

5. Project timeline (activities).

Q1:

- Establish a seat license plan for 2 concurrent users of Aira (this plan would include smart glasses and mifi devices to be used by individuals, insurance to cover lost or broken AIRA-owned devices, and access time with Aira agents)
- Provide floorplans of the Main Library to Aira, to be distributed to agents who will assist library users
- Purchase iPod Touch devices
- Prepare materials for outreach to the community of potential users
- Work with staff at the Lighthouse for the Blind to plan for public information sessions and help getting out the word

Q2 – 4:

- Make devices available
- Offer ongoing user support
- Continually gather feedback about user experience
- Report on success of the project to PLP

6. Evaluation of the project.

We will:

- continually survey users regarding their experience using the service, including:
 - Have you visited _____ (a desk, room, gallery space) before?
 - Did you independently travel there before?
 - Did you need to ask for help from SFPL staff along the way?
 - Will you use this service again?
 - Will you recommend it to others?
 - Do you have suggestions for making this experience better?
- record the number of users
- record the number of repeat users

7. Project budget.

Seat license for 2 concurrent users (Aira-owned devices, insurance and agent support)	\$7200.00
Purchase of 4 iPod Touch devices	800.00
Fiscal Agency Overhead: Friends and Foundation of the San Francisco Public Library	800.00
TOTAL	\$8800.00

8. Sustainability analysis

The San Francisco Public Library has a long history of supporting innovative services for people with disabilities. The Library for the Blind and Print Disabled was established as a grant-funded pilot project serving seniors in one neighborhood; 46 years later, it serves the entire City and County of San Francisco. A program for computer-based adaptive technology that began with acquisition of one grant-funded computer configured for use by those who are blind has grown into a technology program that serves people with all kinds of disabilities in all SFPL libraries. If this navigation technology proves to be an effective new tool for library users who are blind, it promises to be a program of service that will have ongoing support from the Library.