

PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program Application (Category A)

1. One paragraph project summary.

This project would allow the San Benito County Free Library to purchase and lend textbooks for all Gavilan College courses held at the Briggs Building in Hollister, California (approximately 55 classes per semester). The main Gavilan College campus and Gavilan College Library are located in Gilroy, California, approximately 20 miles from the San Benito County Free Library and the Briggs Building. The San Benito County Free Library would like to purchase 3 copies of each textbook and lend them on a short-term, library-use-only basis, similar to the course reserves system used in many college and university libraries.

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

This project fits with the San Benito County Free Library's strategic directions of supporting learning and education at all levels, providing equitable access to information, providing information and resources to community members who may be economically disadvantaged or geographically isolated, and increasing library resources for young adults and college students.

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

The seemingly ever-growing costs of textbooks is a continuing problem in the academic world. Many college students are unable to afford the books they need for their classes which presents these students with a significant barrier to academic success. Moreover, this barrier disproportionately affects students who are economically disadvantaged, living in rural, geographically-isolated areas, or both.

The poverty rate in San Benito County is 9.72% and the median household income in San Benito County is \$80,760 – much lower than in neighboring Santa Clara County's median household income of \$119,035. Because San Benito County is also a rural county geographically isolated from the surrounding Santa Clara, Monterey, and Santa Cruz counties, many of the more than 1,200 Gavilan College students who attend classes at the Briggs Building in Hollister face both barriers of economic disadvantage and geographic isolation. These students face the additional barrier of being geographically isolated from the Gavilan College Library, which is located in Gilroy – approximately 20 miles away, which can incur more than 90 minutes of driving time one way during rush hour traffic.

This project seeks to help alleviate these barriers to academic success by providing Gavilan College students who attend classes at the Briggs Building in Hollister with

access to all assigned textbooks for their classes via the San Benito County Free Library, which is located 2 blocks away. The students who are able to afford their textbooks are purchasing them, but students who are not able afford to purchase them or are not able to share with another student simply do not have access to their textbooks. Even if they were able to afford the transportation to Gilroy to the Gavilan College Library (an approximately 40 mile round trip commute with public transportation available only once daily), the campus library does not have a budget for a textbook collection and therefore does not have a circulating textbook collection, with the exception of the very few textbooks that are donated to them.

The funding from this grant would be used to conduct a year-long pilot program, during which the San Benito County Free Library would purchase 3 copies of each Briggs Building course textbook and lend them on a short-term, library-use-only similar to the course reserves system used in many college and university libraries.

During this time, the library would collect circulation data as well as qualitative information from students about whether and how the program contributed to their academic success in the form of a questionnaire included with each textbook upon checkout as well as a final survey that will be distributed to all Briggs Building students with the help of the Briggs Building Site Coordinator, Judy Rodriguez. If the program has positive results, the library would use that data to expand its partnership with Gavilan College and seek funding from the college and/or county of San Benito in order to continue to support the program.

4. Goals and objectives of the project.

The goal of this project is to support the academic success of Gavilan College students in San Benito County by removing the barriers of the high cost of textbooks and the geographic isolation of living in a rural area. This project will work toward these goals by providing access to textbooks free of charge in a location that is physically much closer than the Gavilan College library.

5. Project timeline (activities).

December 2019 – collect information regarding what Gavilan College classes are being offered at the Briggs Building in Hollister, and what textbooks they will be using. Purchase 3 copies of each textbook.

January 2020 – Receive, process, and catalog textbooks. Finalize circulation procedures and train staff. Begin promoting program to Gavilan College Briggs Building students. Begin circulating textbooks and collecting circulation data. Begin collecting qualitative data from students.

January 27, 2020 – First day of instruction at Gavilan College

May 22, 2020 – Last day of Gavilan College Spring 2020 semester

June 2020 – Collect final circulation data and qualitative data and begin project evaluation.

July 2020 – Collect information regarding what Gavilan College classes are being offered at the Briggs Building in Hollister for the Fall 2020 semester, and what textbooks they will be using. Purchase 3 copies of each textbook.

August 2020 – Receive, process, and catalog textbooks. Finalize circulation procedures and train staff. Begin promoting program to Gavilan College Briggs Building students. Begin circulating textbooks and collecting circulation data. Begin collecting qualitative data from students.

December 2020 – Collect final circulation data and qualitative data. Begin project evaluation and decide whether or not to pursue continued funding from Gavilan College/San Benito County.

6. Evaluation of the project.

Evaluation of the project will be based upon the quantitative data surrounding how much Gavilan College textbooks circulate and the qualitative data collected via book and email surveys regarding whether Gavilan College Briggs Building students report that this project has contributed to their academic success.

7. Project budget. (Indirect costs are not allowed).

There are approximately 55 Gavilan College classes offered per semester at the Briggs Building in Hollister. The average price per text book is \$82. Allowing for Hollister's sales tax rate of 9.25%, this is a subtotal of \$4,927. We would like to purchase 3 copies of each textbook, which would bring us to a grand total of \$14,782.

8. Sustainability analysis.

The Library Director (Nora Conte) has spoken with the Friends of the San Benito County Free Library and has received their commitment to match this grant in the amount of \$10,000.00. There has also been communication with the director of the Gavilan College Library and additional matching funding from the Associated Students of Gavilan College group as well as the Extended Opportunity Programs & Services (EOPS) program.

If the evaluation of the circulation data and qualitative data from this pilot project shows positive results and students indicate that the project has contributed positive to their academic success, the San Benito County Free Library will use this information to expand on their current partnership with Gavilan College and pursue funding to continue providing library access to textbooks to Gavilan College Briggs Building students from Gavilan College, the County of San Benito, or both.