PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program Application

Library Name: Los Gatos Library

Project Title:

Select category you are applying under:

- [x] Category A: Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant
- [ ] Category B: Grant Replication Program
  
  If Category B is selected, enter the name of the grant you are replicating:

1. Please provide a one paragraph project summary.

“It Takes a Town: Unhoused Community Care & Comfort” is an Innovation Grant dedicated to unhoused resources for the Town of Los Gatos. Funds will be spent on unhoused care kits, a Comfort Cabinet with personal care supplies, VTA passes and other transportation and care resources to support the unhoused residents in Town as well as the unhoused community members who pass through our Town. One of the main aspects of this project is to develop strong and long-lasting community partnerships with neighboring organizations to support the unhoused and underhoused in our Town, and to sustain our project with continued promotion of existing services, future Townwide efforts, Library-initiated programming and outreach, and donations from the community to restock our Comfort Cabinet.

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

In recent years, the Library department in the Town of Los Gatos has collaborated more closely with other Town departments and Santa Clara County divisions on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives and Behavioral Health services. The Library’s strategic plan includes the goal to foster community connections and partnerships, and this project will deepen our connections with neighboring organizations that are already providing resources for the unhoused community. This project will create stronger partnerships to ultimately address the needs of our unhoused community. As the Town of Los Gatos allocates more funds to caring for the unhoused population, the Library is dedicated to supporting and promoting these Townwide efforts.
3. Please provide a detailed description of the proposed project including the population served and the demographics of that population.

Our proposed project will overall make small steps to set up a Library Comfort Cabinet, which will provide tangible relief for our unhoused population in the form of personal care items such as toothpastes and toothbrushes, wipes/facial tissues, band-aids, soap, deodorant, Q-tips, tampons, pads, water bottles, granola bars, socks, Neosporin, lotion, ChapStick, and more. In addition to the Comfort Cabinet, the Library will also provide pre-loaded VTA bus passes (Clipper cards) as well as set up a Lyft Business account that we will be able to easily use for patrons who need extra assistance getting to a specific location on our list of destinations (such as a nearby hotel that offers vouchers, a shelter, or a place to take a shower or get social services). As we promote our program, we will also promote an Amazon Wish List that is regularly updated to include items that are needed for our Comfort Cabinet. We will heavily rely on our community partners to discover what services are already available through local churches, meal/grocery services, County-wide initiatives for mental and behavioral health and social services, and more, so that we can cross-promote these services to provide a more wholistic approach to serving the unhoused demographic.

As the Town of Los Gatos is a “small” town of about 34,000, the Library sees a smaller, but consistent population of unhoused residents who call Los Gatos their home. According to a Town Council report, there are only about 16 unhoused residents in our Town. We know most of them by name, and see them almost everyday as they use our facilities to charge devices, access the Internet and other Library materials, and find refuge. While we know that many unhoused people may not be included in census data and we do not have specific information about their demographics, we do know that caring for unhoused folks is a great need in every community including ours. Much of the data we need about our unhoused folks remains to be seen as marginalized people are left out of many discussions.

The Town of Los Gatos general plan includes the goal to provide healthy food, green spaces, medical services, and education to people of all backgrounds and socioeconomic status. The general plan also mentions the goal to provide safe and sanitary housing in the community and poverty-alleviating programs and services. While we know how powerful the Library can be to create change in the community, we also understand that we cannot do it alone, and we need to partner with other organizations, Town and County departments, faith-based organizations, and more to fulfill tangible needs of unhoused people. We also know that our Comfort Cabinet will not only serve unhoused people but will also serve the general public. When we focus on disadvantaged communities, it is true that the community as a whole can benefit from it.

Our project is intended to be a pilot project that will serve as useful data for the Town of Los Gatos for future endeavors to help this population. We will carefully track all data of which items are most needed, how many rides and VTA passes are used, and keep in touch regularly
with our partners to see what changes they see on their ends. We will continue to work with our partners to see how to keep moving forward.

4. What are the goals and objectives of the project?

Our goal is to provide resources and supplies to members of our community who are unhoused or underhoused and to support their independence and dignity during this difficult time. We hope to connect them with our partners in the area who can help them find housing, jobs, nutrition services, medical and mental health care, transportation, and more.

We plan to do this by providing both passive resources in the form of a Comfort Cabinet and care kits and more active programming including our weekly County Behavioral Health Navigator Program which provides assistance and connections to County and community support opportunities. Ultimately, we would like to expand on this type of programming, hosting other County departments that can provide information on all the resources available.

5. Please include your project timeline (include detail of activities).

   Phase 1: Review budget and purchase materials and supplies, prioritizing larger purchases that may take longer to ship
   Phase 2: Purchase VTA passes and set up Lyft Business account. For Lyft, we will discern how many and which stops to offer rides to in Town (hotels, shelters, County offices, locations for showers or meals, etc.)
   Phase 3: Reach out to neighboring organizations and schedule meetings to get to know one another and the different services we provide (faith-based organizations, low-income housing apartments, County social services, Park-it Market, other Town departments, hotels and shelters, and more). Coordinate with the organizations who decide to partner with us to see what kinds of services we can provide around transportation kits, the Comfort Cabinet, and more
   Phase 4: Prepare marketing and promotion materials, such as unhoused resource sheets, signage for Comfort Cabinet, events, etc.
   Phase 5: Train staff on new plans for Comfort Cabinet and transportation passes. Train staff in smaller groups and practice role playing different scenarios with helping and pointing unhoused folks to our new resources in welcoming and inclusive ways
   Phase 6: Create Amazon Wish List for our Comfort Cabinet
   Phase 7: Plan and coordinate unhoused care kit assembly programs for community members to join and participate in
   Phase 8: Launch our Comfort Cabinet and transportation passes, and share our Amazon Wish List with the community
   Phase 9: Outreach to different areas around Town parks to spread word about our Comfort Cabinet and transportation options, and hand out kits and other resources, and even let our housed community know they can donate select items to the Library
Phase 10: Evaluate our pilot programs and analyze data and statistics, and see which items are more needed in our community, how many rides were used from our Lyft Business account, etc. Discuss with the Town how to address future needs and funds beyond this grant period, and continue to promote our Amazon Wish List to patrons.

6. Please indicate how you will evaluate success of your project.

Success will be measured through a couple of different methods. First, we will measure usage of our care kits, Comfort Cabinet supplies, VTA passes, and Lyft rides. We will have anonymous surveys at the cabinet to ask if and how the items provided are helpful and asking for feedback on what other types of items might be appreciated. In addition, we hope to eventually transfer the project to our Town administration with fully developed resources, programs, and services so the transition will be seamless, and the project is run with the same care and thoughtfulness as when it was implemented. We will also continue developing our relationships with our partners and get anecdotal data from them to see whether their services are being used more, or if they need to alter or change any of their services.

We also hope to learn more about the types of resources and services our community needs most, and we want our community to be aware of what is available to them and ultimately, make use of these resources.

7. Please detail your project budget. (Note: Indirect costs are not allowed).

| Personal Care Supplies for Comfort Cabinet AND for Unhoused Care Kits assembly programs | $4000 |
| Promotional materials (signage, print materials) | $200 |
| Cabinet (Comfort Cabinet) | $1000 |
| VTA passes – issued in the form of Clipper Cards pre-loaded with Day Pass fare (200) | $2100 |
| Lyft Business account to provide rides to specific locations around the area | $1000 |
| Baskets/containers to hold items for Comfort Cabinet | $300 |
| StreetLab outreach furniture benches and Uni Tower/Cubes | $3400 |
| **TOTAL** | **$12,000** |

8. Please indicate how the project will be sustained after the grant term is over.
The Town of Los Gatos allocated $50,000 to provide services for homeless residents in Town earlier this year, including $10,000 for the Shower Ministry, $10,000 in a hotel voucher program, and $30,000 towards a permanent public restroom that will be built over the next few years in Town Plaza Park. The Library will continue to promote these services even after the grant period ends through continued promotion of our Comfort Cabinet and our Unhoused Care Kit assembly programs. While we may not be able to offer as many Unhoused Care Kits for giveaway, we can use our general program budget for these programs on a smaller scale once a year during the holidays.

In 2021, the Town adopted a plan to end homelessness, and how that is to be organized over the next several years will depend greatly on funding and partnering with local organizations. After the grant term is over, the Library will continue to promote the services that the Town will be providing, and will rely heavily on donations from the public as we regularly update and keep track of which items need refilling for our Comfort Cabinet. Our plan during the grant period is to promote donations and work with our partners to gather donation items for our Cabinet, and to make our Library a permanent spot for donation of specific items. As we track which items get taken from the Cabinet most, we will also hopefully be able to determine the costs to purchase with our own funds, if needed, the items that are most needed.

As we pilot our transportation program with this grant, we will carefully track statistics and usage and give the Town the information they need to supplement these costs and sustain the program in the future. Through internal discussions, the Town is interested in getting a Lyft business account of their own for these purposes.

Complete Only for Category B Grants:

9. Explain what grant was selected to replicate and why.

10. If there are changes or enhancements to the original grant, including budgetary changes, please detail the changes and your rationale for making them.