

Maximizing Learning Spaces 2019/20 Frequently Asked Questions

What are the goals of the project?

The project supports libraries in reimagining and transforming underutilized spaces to maximize their potential for reading, literacy, and learning.

We do this by funding libraries to hire professional designers and by funding the purchase of moveable furniture to realize existing designs.

How does the project work this year?

This year we're separating the funding into two distinct opportunities to provide greater flexibility, enable more libraries to participate, and to help ensure success.

The first opportunity funds up to \$10,000 for libraries to hire an interior designer to redesign an existing library space. The library will select, contract with, and work directly with the designer, and get reimbursed by the Southern California Library Cooperative (SCLC) upon completion of the design.

The second opportunity funds up to \$10,000 for libraries to purchase movable furnishings where a design has already been created, but the space hasn't yet been transformed. Libraries will select and order the furniture directly.

The project manager will support the libraries through the process by working with each library on key dates and success criteria, tracking progress, reviewing furniture orders and designs, and gathering project information.

Each California Public Library jurisdiction can submit one application for each funding opportunity, for a total of two per jurisdiction. Since both opportunities run simultaneous, it isn't feasible to submit the same space for both design and furnishing.

What are the key dates for the project?

Applications can be submitted now with a deadline of December 3, 2019 at 5pm.

Go to the Maximizing Learning Spaces page on the California State Library page for the online submission link, the guidelines, and a copy of the questions you'll see on the online link. Hard copies are due to Wayne at SCLC by December 10, 2019.

We'll select the participants and notify all applicants by December 18, 2019.

In January, the project manager will work with each library to agree on key dates and other information to track.

By June 30, 2020, all designs must be completed, all furniture must be received and accepted, and participants must submit copies of invoices and requests for reimbursement to SCLC for the grant funds.

Are we limited to specific designers or furniture vendors?

No, you're welcome to work with any design professional or furniture vendor.

We are happy to share the contact information for any of the previous MLS partners, have some examples of their work, and can let you know which libraries worked with whom. We can also provide a list of other design firms and furniture vendors that we've heard of but not worked with. Please contact Christian, the project manager for more information.

Here are our project partners from the last two years:

Designers

Adrian-Gaus Architects
Anderson Brulé Architects
Diane Lam
La Cañada Design Group
LPA

Library Furniture

Ross McDonald Company
Yamada Enterprises

What do we need to apply?

You'll need a space that can be improved.

For the design opportunity, you'll need to talk to one or more designer to get cost and timeline estimates. Since everyone's space and vision will be different, this will tell you if you'll be able to complete the project by June 30th and whether you'll need any match funding.

For the furnishing opportunity, you'll need an existing design that can be realized by the end of June using the grant funding and any match funding you've identified. You'll need to know what furnishings you'll need to complete the space including an estimate of their costs.

For both opportunities, you'll also need your preliminary budget and plan to complete the project. We're asking you to have this for the application to help ensure the participants will be successful. Please be sure to include all expected and related expenses, such as tax, shipping, and installation on any furniture.

How does reimbursement work?

Participating libraries will contract with designers and furniture vendors directly. Once the service or furniture has been delivered and accepted, and the library has been invoiced, you will submit a reimbursement request to SCLC.

We have seen that each jurisdiction has their own approval process and timeline, please take that into account when putting together your plan to ensure you can finish your project by June 30th.

What does “movable furnishings” mean? Any limitations on the furnishing funding?

The furnishings cannot be attached or fixed in place and should be able to be moved (tables, chairs, bookcases, rugs, etc). The grant can also pay for delivery, assembly, placement, and tax, but we cannot pay for any construction, such as breaking down walls, painting, electrical work, or carpet replacement. You are welcome to use match funding for anything the grant funding doesn't cover.

We've seen a lot of variety in the items and are very interested to hear your ideas. You can also visit the previous participants for ideas and speak to Christian about what was ordered. There are a lot of great options out there and casters are ideal. Flexible, reconfigurable spaces have been a central theme of the project and the libraries have given us great feedback on the results.

Are there limitations on the designer funding?

The designer should be professional designer as they'll bring their experience and ways of looking at spaces to your design. We saw many ideas brought up by our prior year partners that seemed simple in retrospect but hadn't been considered before. They can also help ensure the results “work” taking into account traffic flow, spacing, ADA compliance, and other considerations.

Although architectural firms provide design services, the grant cannot pay for architectural design work, just interior design work which such as a space plan, furniture list, and visualizations. If this is part of a larger effort that includes architectural blueprints, participants can use match funding to pay for that portion.

What kind of design is needed to apply for the furnishing funding?

We're looking for a space plan, furniture list, and if applicable, some visualizations of the future space. Ideally, you've already had a professional designer produce the design and are now seeking to transform your space. Your application can be a space within a larger design, such as an entire location.

The design does not have to come from a paid designer. Libraries can leverage their community and organization to produce these. Your city or county may also already have preferred vendors

and styles. We're also happy to share the contact information for our previous partners and you can even see their work.

Having a design to work from will help ensure success in your transformation.

The application asks to detail our plans and budget, why?

We want to ensure that all of our participants succeed. Many of the prior participants did work such as electrical, removing shelves, and other construction, that required jurisdiction or support group work. Many chose to buy additional furniture. These required approvals, coordination, commitments, and a lot of time. In some cases there were unexpected delays or costs.

Putting together a plan and budget gives you a chance to identify what it will take to complete the project and make sure you'll have the resources to be successful. The details should be enough to show that you've considered what it will take and that you will have the time and resources to complete the project.

Participants will work with Christian to agree on key dates and information to track and you will likely refine your plan and budget then.

If I need help with the application in any way, who do I contact?

Please contact the Project Manager Christian Theyer with any questions. His email is christian@theyerconsulting.com