



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0372, **Version:** 1

Department: County Library

Department Head/Elected Official: Edward Melton, Executive Director

Regular or Supplemental RCA: Regular RCA

Type of Request: Financial Authorization

Project ID (if applicable): N/A

Vendor/Entity Legal Name (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Contracted Goal (if applicable): N/A

MWDBE Current Participation (if applicable): N/A

Justification for 0% MWDBE Participation Goal: N/A - Goal not applicable to request

Request Summary (Agenda Caption):

Request for approval to purchase food and related supplies for multiple upcoming workshops using grant funds in the amount of \$729.06 received from the Public Library Association for the FY 2022 Digital Literacy Workshop Training Incentive Program.

Background and Discussion: Harris County Public Library is one of the nation's largest public library systems, serving 4.71 million people, and is home to Houston, one of the most diverse cities in the United States. Unfortunately, 8.4% of its population, or 396,000 people in Harris County do not have a home computer or smart device access, and 13.6% of its population, or 641,012 people, do not have broadband internet access. This lack of access to devices and internet affects some of Harris County's most diverse communities, which limits these communities' abilities to achieve digital literacy. Harris County Public Library is committed to providing Chromebooks and hotspots to those in need in order to bridge the digital divide that is disproportionately affecting our communities of color, but due to the volume of need and the spread-out nature of our county, our library system is limited in its ability to provide adequate digital literacy training to all patrons who are interested in learning these skills. Those residing in low socioeconomic area often do not have access to transportation to travel to a library branch for digital literacy classes, especially those who live in the most rural and urban areas of our county where there is not a nearby branch.

Expected Impact: At Harris County Public Library, we strive to make lifelong learning available to all through our work at local branches, community centers, and outreach events. Currently, these efforts include teaching computer skills classes to a variety of age groups at branches and at several community centers. These incentive funds would allow us to bring basic computer skills classes to partner venues that have the common mission of serving the underserved in a variety of ways, such as providing interview preparation and professional clothing to women through the Dress for Success program and preparing low-income job seekers who face significant barriers to employment for the job-hunting process by providing coaching and occupational training through the SERJobs organization. Being digitally literate is essential for those wanting to

start or advance their career so that they may support their family, and by bringing these classes to partner venues focused on community service, we will be able to reach those who need the skills the most. As part of our outreach plan, these funds would allow us to expand offerings to patrons by teaching classes at community centers in areas that do not have access to our library resources. These community centers are integral to family life in these communities, and constituents' range in age from birth to seniors. As part of our mission of providing services to all patrons, we would use funds to teach classes in Spanish and Farsi at community centers in areas where these are the predominant languages spoken, with the Farsi program being in partnership with Catholic Charities' Refugee Resettlement Program. In addition, we would also offer a virtual class in American Sign Language in order to bring these resources to the widest audience possible. First, we plan to promote our classes by utilizing Facebook advertising. This way information about the class offerings will reach as many people as possible across Harris County on a platform with which most patrons will already be familiar. We also plan to use traditional advertising methods, such as posting posters of various sizes at participating partner locations. In the case of community centers, they will also be aiding us in the advertising process by posting the class information on their online portal and by putting it on their center's calendar.

Alternative Options: We could utilize Harris County General Fund monies instead of grant funds to purchase refreshments for Harris County citizens participating in the workshops.

Alignment with Goal(s):

- ☐ Justice and Safety
- ☒ Economic Opportunity
- ☐ Housing
- ☐ Public Health
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Flooding
- ☐ Environment
- ☒ Governance and Customer Service

Prior Court Action (if any):

Date	Agenda Item #	Action Taken
6/28/2022	172	Approved to apply for grant
10/18/2022	170	Approved to accept grant funds

Location:

Address (if applicable):

Precinct(s): Countywide

Fiscal and Personnel Summary			
Service Name	Library Literacy Program		
	FY 23	FY 24	Next 3 FYs
Incremental Expenditures (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			

Labor Expenditures	\$	\$	\$
Non-Labor Expenditures	\$729.06	\$	\$
Total Incremental Expenditures	\$729.06	\$	\$
Funding Sources (do NOT write values in thousands or millions)			
Existing Budget			
Grant	\$729.06	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Current Budget	\$729.06	\$	\$
Additional Budget Requested			
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Choose an item.	\$	\$	\$
Total Additional Budget Requested	\$	\$	\$
Total Funding Sources	\$729.06	\$	\$
Personnel (Fill out section only if requesting new PCNs)			
Current Position Count for Service	-	-	-
Additional Positions Requested	-	-	-
Total Personnel	-	-	-

Anticipated Court Date: 01/31/2023

Anticipated Implementation Date (if different from Court date):

Emergency/Disaster Recovery Note: Not an emergency, disaster, or COVID-19 related item

Contact(s) name, title, department: Ashley Phillips, Executive Assistant, County Library

Attachments (if applicable): Food/Supply Cost Breakdown, Grant Award Letter and Court Approval