

PLP Grant Replication Program Application (Category B)

1. One paragraph project summary, including description of the unique aspects of the project.

Alameda Free Library's replication of the very successful "Librarians Unleashed" project will use Wi-Fi enabled iPads and wireless barcode scanners to allow library staff to assist patrons anywhere inside the library with questions, checkout, and library card registrations. When paired with a Wi-Fi enabled hotspot, this setup becomes a truly mobile point of service that can be used anywhere in the community. Schools, senior centers, community events, and local parks can all become library service locations. This project will enable library staff to provide library services to as many community members as possible, not just those who are able to visit one of the library branches.

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

Alameda Free Library is choosing to replicate Monterey County Free Libraries' "Librarians Unleashed" grant on a smaller scale. MCFL acquired 10 iPads and barcode scanners, ergonomic cases for each iPad, 5 Wi-Fi hotspots, and service contracts for each hotspot. The library system used the grant funds to create these mobile point of service "kits" which allowed library staff to provide more immediate and efficient service to patrons inside their library branches, and to provide services as outreach throughout the county. As a much smaller system, Alameda Free Library does not need to create as many mobile point of service kits, but would be able to use them to the same effect and see the same kinds of benefits.

We choose this project because it encompasses solutions to several public needs and gaps in service that we have already been working to improve with a variety of unconnected projects. Within the walls of the library branches, the layout of the Main Library branch hinders librarians from working in the collection while also being available to assist patrons. The division of the collection between two floors also leads to gaps in reference services on the floor that does not have a designated Reference desk.

We have made efforts at expanding our services beyond the library walls but we do not have all the necessary technology to provide full services. For example, we have a Book Bike that goes to community events and checks items out to people using an offline module in the Polaris ILS. However, with limited Wi-Fi, we are only able to check items out offline and we do not have the ability to create new library cards. Additionally, we provide computer and smartphone classes geared at teaching patrons about the library's wealth of e-resources, but these come with limitations; class size, time that

appropriate space is available, and a self-selecting audience. Being able to teach these classes outside the library, would enable us to reach a greater audience and serve underserved communities.

“Librarians Unleashed” would give us the tools needed to make these activities more seamless parts of one robust mobile point of service plan.

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

One of the main tenets of Alameda Free Library’s mission is to provide a place for people to “connect to the online world and find the information they need for daily living.” Reaching out to provide people with the opportunity to get library cards, use library services, and learn how to use library resources from wherever they are does just that.

The Alameda Free Library aims to provide its varied resources to all residents of the City of Alameda, regardless of their ability to physically access the library branches. “Librarians Unleashed” would allow us to provide services at schools, the senior center, senior housing, and public events. Making our resources known and eliminating a step in the process of providing access, we will reach parts of the community who are unable to access the library branches during open hours.

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

At the Alameda Free Library, “Librarians Unleashed” will create an opportunity to expand library services to cover as much of the city as possible. The iPads, iPad cases, and barcode scanners will be mobile point of service kits that any librarian can use to provide roaming reference to patrons in the Main Branch, as well as the two branch libraries. These kits can then be taken out to places in the community along with a Wi-Fi hotspot, to provide library services (creating library cards, checking items out, placing items on hold) anywhere that the public will benefit from their presence.

Nearly 40% of the city’s population of 78,000 are children under 18 or seniors 65 and older. Mobile library services that can provide access at schools, the senior center, and senior housing will benefit nearly half of the city. With an average commute over 30 minutes long, many working adults in Alameda have limited opportunities during the week to visit the library. Outreach at community events, such as Farmer’s Markets and Street Fairs, are ideal times for libraries to provide service to these community members.

Although Alameda has a relatively high median household income, and only 9.2% rate of homelessness, the city does have 13 low income housing facilities within its 10 square miles, with several new ones in various stages of construction and development. This construction is part of several larger housing development projects that will likely be substantially increasing the city’s population over the next several years. Establishing regular mobile point of service use out in the community now will allow the library to be prepared to provide service to this growing population.

5. Goals and objectives of the project. (Include here any rationale for changes to the original grant application).

The main objective of this project is to provide thorough and more efficient service to patrons and the Alameda community.

The project will meet the following major goals:

- Give staff the tools to provide services beyond their desks and outside of the library building, increasing interactions between staff and patrons in the stacks and out in the community.
- Highlight staff expertise, skills, and knowledge of useful and relevant resources, creating positive customer service interactions.
- Expand librarians' ability to serve students by directly providing them with the tools to access library resources.
- Enable better service to senior citizens by dedicating staff time to them at the senior center and in senior housing facilities.
- Expand library service to the general public by showcasing the library's relevance and ease of use.

6. Project timeline (activities).

November 2019	Outline a project rollout plan, confirm what equipment to order.
November 2019	Order equipment.
January 2020	Receive and configure equipment; put together "kits".
January 2020	Create staff instructions for mobile kit use; train staff in use.
February 2020	Begin using equipment within library branches.
April 2020	Being using equipment at community events leading up to the Alameda Spring Festival in May 2020.

7. Evaluation of the project.

Project managers will develop an outcomes-based survey for staff to see if, and how, this technology helps them with their jobs and how it helps them improve customer service.

We will also gather statistical data during outreach programs to see how many library cards were created and how many other library services were delivered at each event outside of the library.

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

5 iPad Wi-Fi only 32 gig + tax	\$1850.00
5 tablet carrying cases + tax	\$175.00
5 wireless barcode scanners + tax	\$500.00
5 Wi-Fi hotspot devices + tax	\$1325.00
Mobile broadband connection plans for 1 year at \$35/month	\$2100.00
Additional iPad accessories (replacement charging cables)	\$550
Total	\$6,500.00

9. Sustainability analysis.

After the initial purchase of the equipment, the project will be sustainable, as no periodic maintenance costs are anticipated. Alameda Free Library will absorb the \$2100 cost for the annual service plan for the Wi-Fi hotspots into the technology budget.