Public Library Infrastructure Grants
Tips for applying

Please read the Public Library Infrastructure Grants Guidelines and talk to your Public Library Services (PLS) Consultant as you write your application.

Guidelines are available at https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/subsidies-and-grants/public-library-grants

State Library Consultants' details are available at https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/public-library-grants-inquiries

Form
The SmartyGrants form has strict word limits. Your responses will automatically be cut off once you reach the word limit for each question.

We rarely have problems with SmartyGrants but it is a good idea to save a copy of your application as a word document so that you don't risk losing the information.

Maps feature
The maps feature assists us in reporting applications and projects by location.

When filling out the application form you will need to add your library and project addresses and these will be marked on maps. Please include the address of each location for your project. For example, if your application is for a technology project such as RFID that will be installed across a library service, enter each branch location by selecting the 'add more' button in your application form. If you are undertaking refurbishments and/or purchasing furniture for a number of branches, please include each address.

IT Infrastructure Projects
IT related projects that will significantly improve library services, such as library systems, technology infrastructure and RFID, will be more competitive than smaller scale IT projects. Applications for a list of equipment such as tablets, 3D printers or laptops will be less competitive.

Amount of funding requested
The maximum amount per grant is $500,000, and significant projects are particularly encouraged. Don't think that if you ask for less money you have more chance of being successful, this is not the case. The Guidelines explicitly encourage projects over $30,000. All grants are evaluated against the assessment criteria.

Supporting documents
Applications requesting funds from $200,001 up to $500,000 require more supporting documents than those $200,000 and under.

Additional supporting evidence for grants between $200,001 and $500,000 is to be included, as appropriate:
- Detailed plans
- Development Application
- Detailed costings (possibly including quantity surveyor documentation)
- Matching funding
- Use of People Places guidelines and tools
- Reference to other relevant NSW public library standards

Matching funding
Matching funding is listed as additional supporting evidence for grants from $200,001 to $500,000. Applications where council provides matching funding are likely to score higher on council commitment. Applications where council is not providing matching funding will still be eligible. In-kind funding can be included as part of matching funding but this must represent tangible works associated with the project. For example landscaping undertaken by council around a new library could be counted, however time for project management would not contribute to matching funding.

Community need and benefit
These are key elements of your grant application. When addressing community benefit and community need make sure you add some evidence such as statistics on a particular community group (growing numbers etc); lack of suitable alternative options; heavy use of current equipment/facilities and letters of support or requests from the community. Partnerships with local organisations or community groups can significantly extend the benefit of a project.

Council commitment
In the section on council commitment you are encouraged to include a brief statement outlining how council has allocated the increased annual State Government funding to improve library services.

Council commitment to the library service can also be demonstrated through the provision of land or a council owned building for a new build or refurbishment, even if this has not been purchased recently with this specific project in mind.

If council has engaged consultants to undertake strategic planning or community consultation that covers library services, this may also be included. Recent significant library related improvements such as a new or refurbished branch, new technology, increased opening hours or staffing all go towards demonstrating council commitment to the library service.

Letters of support
If you are working in partnership with a local group, ensure that you have evidence of commitment or support from the relevant group. Letters/emails of support from the members of community should be written in their own words. Multiple form letters with different signatures do not add significantly to the application.

An application from a council that is a member of a regional library service requires a letter of commitment from the Regional Library Manager.

Sustainability
In the section on sustainability you need to include more than environmental issues. Sustainability might include engaging with local groups to ensure that the project is suitable, promotion to ensure use of the resource into the future and financial commitment from council and/or a budget to maintain the project beyond the initial grant funding.

Staged projects
If the application is for a project that will be delivered in stages, for example renovation of an area of the library with expansion planned for future years, it is recommended that you include reference to all stages of the project. The later stages of the project are likely to strengthen the arguments for sustainability with the library building increasing in size for the community in coming years; council commitment, with council committing funds and undergoing planning for the project; and could potentially count towards matching funding.

Library building projects
If a building project is to be undertaken at multiple library branches you need to include catchment and size information for each branch in your application. This could include a renovation, technology or furniture upgrade. A table is provided in the application that allows you to enter information for multiple branches.

Determining Library size
The Library building calculator is used to help you determine a suitable sized library for your community. It includes a population calculator, service calculator and renovation calculator. They can be found at www.sl.nsw.gov.au/public-library-services/people-places/library-building-calculator

Please talk to your State Library Consultant if you would like assistance using the calculator.

Library refurbishment
All library refurbishments including requests for furniture are classed as building projects and applications should include the *People Places library building calculator*. Talk to your Consultant if you have concerns about completing the forms. If a building falls below the recommended size this does not automatically mean that the project will not be funded but it may not be as competitive as other applications for buildings that are of appropriate size for the community.