



ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND (ACHF) Regional Library System Application Narrative Form State Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)

The regional library system named below applies for funds as authorized and provided for in [Laws of Minnesota 2023, Regular Session, chapter 4, article 4, section 2, subdivision 5](#).

A completed application, due August 2, 2023 at 5 p.m., includes:

- This narrative form including assurances with signature(s) (PDF)
- Completed budget form (Excel spreadsheet)

Please submit the signed original application documents to [Ashley Bieber](#) at State Library Services.

Regional library system name: Great River Regional Library

Address: 1300 West Saint Germain Street, Saint Cloud, MN 56301

Regional Library System Administrator Name: Karen Pundsack

Phone: 320-650-2512

Email: karenp@grrl.lib.mn.us

ACHF program coordinator name: Beth Ringsmuth Stolpman

Phone: 320-650-2510

Email: bethr@grrl.lib.mn.us

Regional Library System Finance Manager: Amy Anderson

Phone: 320-650-2541

Email: amya@grrl.lib.mn.us

Regional library system UEI Number: K869RN4FKEP3

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

The information in this application is true and correct to the best of our knowledge. We understand and agree to comply with the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund grant program assurances and all other applicable state policies.

Chair, Regional Library System Governing Board

Regional Library System Administrator

Signature _____

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____

Date _____

ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND

Regional Library System Grant Program Assurances

The regional library system assures that it will comply with the following:

1. Use of Funds

Funds shall be used only for purposes specified in the approved grant application or approved by the director of State Library Services in an amendment to the original application submitted under provisions of [Minnesota Rules, chapter 3530](#). The purpose of the grant is to provide educational opportunities in the arts, history, literary arts, and cultural heritage in order to expand arts, arts education, and arts access and to preserve Minnesota's history and cultural heritage. These funds may be used to sponsor projects provided by regional public libraries, or to provide grants to local arts and cultural heritage programs for projects in partnership with regional public libraries. A recipient may not incur expenses on the grant award prior to the execution of the grant agreement.

Funds may not be used for the benefit of state employees, which includes, but is not limited to, reimbursement for any of their expenditures, including travel expenses, alcohol purchases, costs of registration fees for training sessions or educational courses presented or arranged, payments to state employees for presentations at workshops, seminars, etc., whether on state time, vacation time, leave of absence or any other non-work time.

Reimbursement for travel and subsistence expenses actually and necessarily incurred by grantee in performance of this project will be paid provided that the grantee shall be reimbursed for travel and subsistence expenses in the same manner and in no greater amount than in the current "[Commissioner's Plan](#)," promulgated by the Commissioner of Minnesota Management & Budget (MMB).

2. Terms of Acceptance

These funds are granted to the Regional Library System under (session law) and in accordance with Minnesota Statutes 2021, [section 16B.97 Grants Management](#) and [section 16B.98 Grants Management](#) Process requirements. By accepting an award the Grantee agrees to comply with all provisions of the award including all assurances and certifications made in this application and in the executed Official Grant Award Notification (OGAN), and all applicable state or federal statutes, regulations, and guidelines. The Grantee agrees to administer the program in accordance with the approved application, budget, timelines, and other supplemental information submitted in support of the approved application. Grant goals and objectives should be carried out in accordance with the guidelines established by the Minnesota Department of Education. The Constitutional Amendment (Article XI, section 15) of the Minnesota Constitution that established the grant program states that ACHF must supplement traditional sources of funding, and may not be used as a substitute or to supplant existing funding sources.

3. Grant Agreement Components

The grant agreement between the regional library system and MDE consists of the signed application and budget (including assurances), Official Grant Award Notification (OGAN), and the MDE Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund Grant Guidelines. The Grantee shall comply with all required grants management policies and procedures under [Minnesota Statutes, section 16B.97](#) except when superseded by specific instructions contained herein.

4. Payments

Payments will be distributed in ten equal payments beginning in fall 2023.

5. Program Reporting

Reports summarizing grant activities and outcomes, including any data collected, requested or related to the grant program are due to MDE as follows:

- a) **Interim Progress Reports** including 1) an executive summary of accomplishments, and 2) a spreadsheet with details about each of the projects paid for with funds from state fiscal year 2024 are due to MDE by September 30 of each year of the grant.
- b) A **Completion Report** must be submitted within 90 days of fully expending your state fiscal year 2024 allocation, or by June 30, 2026, whichever comes first. A Completion Report includes but is not limited to 1) a final executive summary of accomplishments, including any data requested; 2) a spreadsheet with details about each of the projects paid for with funds from the identified fiscal year; and 3) other materials as requested by MDE program staff or required by the state funding source.
- c) Information in the Completion Report is cumulative with Interim Progress Reports. A Completion Report updates and adds to previously submitted Interim Progress Reports, and closes out the spending of the state fiscal year 2024 allocation by itemizing, on a project by project basis, how the total allocation was spent.

6. Financial Reporting

Financial Reporting Forms summarizing grant expenditures shall be submitted in the form and manner prescribed by MDE, as follows:

- a) Financial Reporting Forms shall be submitted quarterly and separately for each grant year until all funds are expended through the end of grant term, as follows:

Time period	Due date
September 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023	January 31, 2024
January 1, 2024 – March 31, 2024	April 30, 2024
April 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024	July 31, 2024
July 1, 2024 – September 30, 2024	October 30, 2024
October 1, 2024 – December 31, 2024	February 1, 2025
January 1, 2025 – March 31, 2025	April 30, 2025
April 1, 2025 – June 30, 2025	July 30, 2025

- b) The Grantee must track the ACHF grant budget and expenditures separately from other organization budgets.

7. Budget Revisions

The Grantee must receive prior written approval from MDE for any budgetary changes of approved line item amounts greater than 10% of the total grant award available for expenditure during the grant period. Total budget line item deviations exceeding 10% of the total award must be approved in writing by MDE prior to incurring the expenditure. In its request for approval, the Grantee must include supporting information to justify why the change is necessary. MDE is not legally obligated to approve expenditures incurred on budget line item changes that exceed 10% of the total award for which prior approval has not been granted. The Grantee may not incur expenditures within a budget line item that is not included in the approved budget without the written approval of MDE.

8. Continuation of Future Funding

Continuation of future funding is contingent upon satisfactory performance. The Grantee is responsible for:

- Submitting statutorily-compliant reports in a timely manner.

- Ensuring all ACHF-funded projects comply with ACHF intent, goals and desired outcomes.
- Satisfying all applicable ACHF requirements.
- Submitting an application with work plan and budget for Fiscal Year 2024 ACHF funds.

9. Discontinuation of Participation

If participation by a regional library system or a member local governmental unit is discontinued, ownership of the discontinuing system's or unit's assets purchased with Arts and Cultural Heritage Funds, including cash or the fair market value of such assets, cannot be transferred by the applicant and shall revert to the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) for reassignment for library services elsewhere. ([Minn. R. 3530.0200, subp. 4, C](#) (2013))

10. Cancellation

- Cancellation With or Without Cause.** An award contract may be cancelled by the state at any time, with or without cause, upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the Grantee. Upon termination, the Grantee will be entitled to payment, determined on a pro rata basis, for services satisfactorily performed and for approvable expenditures.
- Cancellation Due to Discontinued or Insufficient Funding.** It is expressly understood and agreed that in the event the funding to the state from appropriations by the Minnesota Legislature is not obtained and/or continued at an aggregate level sufficient to allow for the Grantee's program to continue operating, the grant shall immediately be terminated upon written notice by the state to the Grantee. The state is not obligated to pay for any services that are provided after notice and effective date of termination. However, the Grantee will be entitled to payment, determined on a pro-rata basis, for services satisfactorily performed and approvable expenditures incurred prior to termination to the extent that funds are available. The state will not be assessed any penalty if the grant is terminated because of a decision of the Minnesota Legislature not to appropriate funds. The state must provide the Grantee notice within a reasonable time of the state receiving notice.
- Cancellation Due to Failure to Comply.** The state may cancel an award contract immediately if the state finds that there has been a failure to comply with the provisions of an award, that reasonable progress has not been made, or that the purposes for which the funds were awarded/granted have not been or will not be fulfilled. The state may take action to protect the interests of the state of Minnesota, including the refusal to disburse additional funds and requiring the return of all or part of the funds already disbursed.
- In the event of any cancellation,** the state will recover any unexpended funds that have not been accounted for in an accepted financial report to the State.

11. Conditions of Payment

- The Grantee must comply with the [Minnesota Constitution, article XI, section 15](#), and may not substitute money received from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund for a traditional source of funding.
- The Grantee must promptly return to the state any unexpended funds that have not been accounted for annually in a financial report to the state due at grant closeout.
- Payments to individuals: The Grantee must ensure that every individual receiving money from this grant in exchange for work, services, performances or participation, complete IRS form W-4, W-8 or W-9, depending upon the individual's employment or citizenship status. All payments to individuals must comply with federal and state tax laws and reporting requirements.

12. Amendments

Any amendments to this award shall be in writing and shall be executed by the same parties who executed the original award, or their successors. An amendment must be requested 45 days prior to the end date of the

award period and is valid and effective upon written approval from the MDE Authorized Representative or their delegate. No amendments will be considered on expired grant awards.

13. Civil Rights Act

The provisions of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, (42 USC Sec. 2000d et seq.), its regulations and all other applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations ([Minn. R. 3530.0200, subp. 4, D](#) (2013)).

14. Internet Safety

The regional library system and its members/branches are in compliance with [Laws of Minnesota 2000, chapter 489, article 6, section 27\(a\)](#) so that all public library computers with access to the Internet available for use by children under the age of 17 restrict, including by use of available software filtering technology or other effective methods, all access by children to material that is reasonably believed to be obscene or child pornography or material harmful to minors under federal or state law, and section (c) so that the library prohibits, including through the use of available software filtering technology or other effective methods, adult access to material that under federal or state law is reasonably believed to be obscene or child pornography.

The regional library system and its members/branches are in compliance with [Laws of Minnesota 2000, chapter 492, article 1, section 49.5A](#), and has adopted a policy to prohibit library users from using the library's Internet access workstations to view, print, or distribute material that is obscene within the meaning of [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 617.241](#).

15. Audits

An independent auditor's report of the regional library system's general purpose financial statements in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in Government Auditing Standards, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States shall include audit of the Arts and Cultural Heritage funds as a unique categorical fund account. The audit shall be submitted no later than 180 days after the close of the system's fiscal year ([Minn. R. 3530.1200 \(2013\)](#)).

Financial Reconciliations/Monitoring and Supporting Documentation

- a) **A financial reconciliation or desk review** of reported expenditures to supporting documentation will occur at least once during the award period on grants that exceed \$50,000. MDE will request supporting documentation for review and reconciliation of at least two (2) budget line item expenditures based on a Financial Reporting Form submitted by the Grantee.
- b) In the event a **monitoring visit(s)** is required by MDE, the Grantee shall cooperate with MDE and shall comply with MDE's requests for documentation and other information, before, during and/or after the visit(s).
- c) Financial documentation to support expenditures incurred under this award must be maintained by the Grantee and provided to MDE upon request. The Grantee's books, records, documents and accounting procedures and practices of the Grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate, for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date (Minn. Stat. 16B.98, subd. 8 (2021)).

State and Federal Audits

The books, records, documents and accounting procedures and practices of the Grantee shall be subject to examination by state or federal auditors, as authorized by law. [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 16C.05, subdivision 5](#) requires the state audit clause be in effect for a minimum of six years. Federal audits shall be governed by requirements of federal regulations.

- a) Under [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 16B.98, subdivision 8](#), the Grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices relevant to this grant contract are subject to examination by the State and/or the State Auditor or Legislative Auditor, as appropriate, for a minimum of six years from the end of the grant contract end date, receipt and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.
- b) If the Grantee (in federal OMB Circular language known as "subrecipient") receives federal assistance from the state of Minnesota, it will comply with the Single Audit Act of 1984 as amended and [OMB circular A-133](#), "Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations" for audits of fiscal years beginning after June 30, 1996; or,
- c) The Grantee will provide copies of the single audit reporting package (as defined in A-133 section 320(c)), financial statement audits, management letters and corrective action plans to the state, the Office of the State Auditor, Single Audit Division or Federal Audit Clearinghouse, in accordance with [OMB A-133](#).

Examination and Audit of Accounts and Records

The state or its representative shall have the right to examine books, records, documents and other evidence and accounting procedures and practices, sufficient to reflect properly all direct and indirect costs and the method of implementing the award. The Grantee shall make available at its office and at all reasonable times before and during the period of record retention, proper facilities for such examination and audit.

16. Subgrantees/Subcontractor/Consultant Services

If the Grantee deems it necessary to contract with outside resources for service delivery, consulting services or technical assistance, a formal agreement must be drawn. The negotiated fees should be reasonable and align with current costs for similar work. The contract executed with each contractor should not allow for work or obligations to begin before the executed date of this grant project and the contract should not extend beyond the end date of the grant project. The work duties should be clearly defined and should explain what initiative the work is related to and the outcome expected from the contractor including due dates for drafts, etc. The contract should outline the payment and invoicing terms. If travel expenses are included as part of the contract terms, maximum travel reimbursement costs should not exceed the [Commissioner's Plan](#). Receipts for travel reimbursements should be submitted along with expense reimbursement requests and invoices prior to reimbursements. The inclusion of a cancellation clause in contracts is recommended. A copy of the contract agreement is to be retained by the Grantee.

The grant agreement for local units of government incorporates the requirements of [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 471.345](#).

The grant agreement for nongovernmental organizations incorporates these best practices:

- a) Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost \$20,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- b) Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$19,999 must be scoped out in writing and offered to a minimum of three (3) bidders.
- c) Any services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$5,000 and \$9,999 must be competitively based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes.
- d) Support documentation of the bidding process utilized to contract services must be included in the Grantee's financial records, including support documentation justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.
- e) For projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, prevailing wage rules apply per [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 177.41 through 177.44](#). Consequently, the bid request must state the project is subject to prevailing wage. These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers

should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole. A prevailing wage form should accompany these bid submittals.

17. Liability

Grantee agrees to indemnify and save and hold the State, its agents and employees harmless from any and all claims or causes of action, including all attorneys' fees incurred by the State arising from the performance of the award by Grantees, agents or employees. This clause shall not be construed to bar any legal remedies Grantee may have for the state's failure to fulfill its obligations pursuant to the award and subsequent awards.

18. Use of Works and Documents

Grantee owns any works or documents developed by the Grantee, its employees, agents, subcontractors, either individually or jointly with others in the performance of this contract unless otherwise negotiated by the Grantee with its subcontractor(s). The State will have royalty free, non-exclusive, and irrevocable right to reproduce, publish, or otherwise use, and to authorize others to use, the works or documents for government purposes.

Definitions. *Works* means all inventions, improvements, discoveries (whether or not patentable or copyrightable), databases, computer programs, reports, notes, studies, photographs, negatives, designs, drawings, specifications, materials, tapes, and disks conceived, reduced to practice, created or originated by the Grantee, its employees, agents, and subcontractors, either individually or jointly with others in the performance of this contract. *Works* includes "Documents." Documents are the originals of any databases, computer programs, reports, notes, studies, photographs, negatives, designs, drawings, specifications, materials, tapes, disks or other materials, whether in tangible or electronic forms, prepared by the Grantee, its employees, agents or subcontractors, in the performance of this contract.

19. Publicity

Any publicity regarding the subject matter of this grant contract must comply with [Laws of Minnesota 2011, 1st Spec. Sess., chapter 6, article 5, section 5](#) which amended [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 129D.17, subdivision 2\(g\)](#) to require use of the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund logo when practicable. All projects funded by the ACHF must publicly credit the fund, including on the Grantee's website when practicable. Publicity and logo guidelines are detailed on the [Legacy website](#). The Grantee must not claim that the State endorses its products or services.

20. Conflict of Interest

In accordance with the [Minnesota Office of Grants Management Policy 08-01](#), the Grantee will establish safeguards to prohibit employees from using their positions for a purpose that constitutes or present the appearance of personal or organizational conflicts of interest, or personal gain.

21. Government Data Practices

The Grantee and the State must comply with [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 13 Government Data Practices](#) as it applies to all data provided by the State under the award, and as it applies to all data created collected, received, stored, used, maintained or disseminated by the Grantee under the award. The civil remedies of [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 13.08](#) apply to the release of the data referred to in this paragraph by either the Grantee or the State. If the Grantee receives a request to release the data referred to in this paragraph, the Grantee must immediately notify the State. The State will give the Grantee instructions concerning the release of the data to the requesting party before the data is released.

22. Data Disclosure

Under [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 270C.65](#) and other applicable law, the Grantee consents to disclosure of its SWIFT Vendor ID Number, Social Security number, DUNS number, federal employer tax identification number and/or Minnesota tax identification number, already provided to the State, to federal and state tax agencies and state personnel involved in the payment of state obligations. These identification numbers may be used in the enforcement of federal and state tax laws which could result in action requiring the Grantee to file state tax returns and pay delinquent state tax liabilities, if any.

23. Worker's Compensation

Grantee certifies that it is in compliance with [Minnesota Statutes 2021, section 176.181, subdivision 2](#), pertaining to workers' compensation insurance coverage. The Grantee's employees and agents will not be considered state employees. Any claims that may arise under the Minnesota Workers' Compensation Act on behalf of these employees and any claims made by any third party as a consequence of any act or omission on the part of these employees are in no way the State's obligation or responsibility. (Exemption/Waiver as allowed under law.)

24. Governing Law, Jurisdiction and Venue

Minnesota law, without regard to its choice-of-law and provisions, governs the award. Venue for all legal proceedings arising out of the award, or its breach, must be in the appropriate state or federal court with competent jurisdiction in Ramsey County, Minnesota.

25. Lobbying

As required by Section 1352, Title 31 of the U.S. Code, and implemented at 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 200, the grantee when signing the application, certifies that:

1. No federally appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of organization, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the making of any federal award, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any federal grant.
2. If any funds other than federally appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this federal grant award, the applicant/grantee shall complete and submit a Standard Form - LLL, "Disclosure Form to Report Lobbying," in accordance with its instructions.
3. The grantee shall require that the language herein shall be included in any award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subgrants, contracts under award, and subcontracts) and that all subrecipients shall certify and disclose accordingly.

Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

26. Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters

As required by [Executive Order 12549](#), Debarment and Suspension, and implemented at 2 CFR 180.200 or amendments thereto, for prospective participants in primary covered transactions.

The grantee certifies that it and its principals:

1. Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible or voluntarily excluded from covered transactions by any federal department or agency;
2. Have not within a three-year period preceding this application or award been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of federal or state antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements or receiving stolen property;
3. Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (federal, state or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (2)(b) of this certification; and,
4. Have not within a three-year period preceding this application had one or more public transaction (federal, state or local) terminated for cause or default.

27. Drug-Free Workplace (Awardees Other Than Individuals)

As required by the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, and implemented at 2 CFR, Part 200, the grantee certifies that it will continue to provide a drug-free workplace by:

1. Publishing a statement notifying employees that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the grantee's workplace and specifying the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibition;
2. Establishing an on-going drug-free awareness program to inform employees about:
 - a. The dangers of drug abuse in the workplace;
 - b. The grantee's policy of maintaining a drug-free workplace;
 - c. Any available drug counseling, rehabilitation and employee assistance programs; and
 - d. The penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace;
3. Making it a requirement that each employee to be engaged in the performance of the award be given a copy of the statement required by paragraph (1);
4. Notifying the employee in the statement required by paragraph (1) that, as a condition of employment under the award, the employee will:
 - a. Abide by the terms of the statement; and,
 - b. Notify the employer in writing of his or her conviction for a violation of a criminal drug statute occurring in the workplace no later than five calendar days after such conviction;
5. Notifying the agency, in writing, within 10 calendar days after receiving notice under subparagraph (4)(b) from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. Employers of convicted employees must provide notice, including position title, to: Director, Grants Policy and Oversight Staff, U.S. Department of Education, 400 Maryland Avenue, S.W. (Room 3652, GSA Regional Office Building No. 3), Washington, DC 20202-4248. Notice shall include the identification number(s) of each affected award;
6. Taking one of the following actions, within 30 calendar days of receiving notice under subparagraph (4)(b), with respect to any employee who is so convicted:
 - a. Taking appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; or,
 - b. Requiring such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health, law enforcement or other appropriate agency;

7. Making a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of Paragraphs (1), (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6).

28. Transferability

The grantee shall not transfer or assign to any party or parties any right(s), obligation(s) or claim(s) under the award without the prior written consent of the state. It is understood, however, that grantee remains solely responsible to the state for providing the products and services described.

29. Time

The grantee must comply with the time requirements described in the application and award, in the performance of this award and if inform the grantor of any potential long term delays or changes affecting those timelines.

30. Nondiscrimination

The grantee will comply with nondiscrimination statutes.

1. Grantees will follow the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and amendments thereto which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin
2. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and amendments which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability
3. Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in education programs
4. Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1975 and amendments.
5. In addition, per federal CFR 200.415, Agreement of Applicant, which states that prior to the Commissioner's issuance of any commitment or other loan approval, shall agree, by signing the application, (in a form prescribed by the Commissioner), that there shall be no discrimination against anyone who is employed in carrying out work receiving assistance pursuant to this chapter, or against an applicant for such employment, because of race, color, religion, sex, handicap, age or national origin.
6. [Minnesota Statutes Chapter 363A. Human Rights](#)

31. Pre-Award Work and Pre-Award Costs

The grantee understands that no work should begin and no pre-award costs would be covered under this award until all required signatures have been obtained; an Official Grant Award Notification (OGAN) has been issued or other award documentation has been received and the grantee is notified to begin work by the state's program authorized representative or their designee. If an exception to this is determined necessary by MDE, the grantee would be informed in writing or email by the state's program authorized representative or designee.

32. Grantee's Grant Program Representative

The applicant's Program Contact Representative will be named on the OGAN or other award information. If the Program Contact Representative or official with authority to sign changes at any time during the grant award period, the applicant/grantee must immediately notify the state.

33. Voter Registration Services

The commissioner or chief administrator officer of each state agency or community-based public agency or nonprofit corporation that contracts with the state agency to carry out obligations of the state agency shall

provide voter registration services for employees and the public. Refer to [Minnesota Statutes, section 201.162](#), Duties of State Agencies for the complete statute.

34. Minimizing State Funded Administrative Costs

Under [Minnesota Statutes, section 16B.98](#), Grants Management Process, a grant from an appropriation of state funds, the recipient of the grant must agree to minimize administrative costs.

35. Supplanting

Grant funds shall not be used to supplant salaries and wages normally budgeted for an employee of the applicant/agency. Total time for each staff position paid through various funding streams financed in part or whole with grant funds shall not exceed one Full Time Equivalent (FTE) except in certain situations. The grantee may allow staff to work on extended day assignments such as after school programs, special education services or other projects, if necessary, or allowable under funding. The grantee must be prepared to disclose all required supporting documentation for salaries paid for their employees.

36. Uniform Municipal Contracting Law – Counties, Schools, Cities – Supplies/Construction

[Per Minnesota Statutes, section 471.345](#), grantees that are municipalities as defined in Subdivision 1 must follow service contracting and bidding requirements as stated including prevailing wage rules for construction work of \$25,000 or more. Support documentation for the procurement processes must be retained.

Support document for the procurement processes must be retained regardless of the source of funding.

37. Contracting – Nongovernmental Entities

Pursuant to Minnesota Statute 471.345, any grant-funded services and/or materials that are expected to cost:

- \$175,000 or more must undergo a formal notice and bidding process.
- Between \$25,000 and \$174,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids.
- Between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.

For grant-funded projects that include construction work of \$25,000 or more, prevailing wage rules apply per [Minnesota Statutes, section 177.41 through section 177.44](#). The bid request must state the project is subject to *prevailing wage*. These rules require that the wages of laborers and workers should be comparable to wages paid for similar work in the community as a whole. A prevailing wage form should accompany these bid submittals.

The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible:

- State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List
- Metropolitan Council's Targeted Vendor list: Minnesota Unified Certification Program
- Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: Central Certification Program

The grantee must maintain:

- Written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.

- Support documentation of the purchasing and/or bidding process utilized to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single/sole source bid, if applicable.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are on the [Suspended/Debarred Vendor Report](#).

Domestic preferences for procurements

As appropriate and to the extent consistent with law, the non-Federal entity should, to the greatest extent practicable under a Federal award, provide a preference for the purchase, acquisition, or use of goods, products, or materials produced in the United States (including but not limited to iron, aluminum, steel, cement, and other manufactured products). The requirements of this section must be included in all subawards including all contracts and purchase orders for work or products under this award.

38. Evidence-Based Education Grant Report

[Minnesota statute 127A.20](#) requires that, within 180 days of the end of the grant period, each grant recipient must compile a report that describes the data that was collected and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies. The evidence-based report may identify or propose alternative strategies based on the results of the data. The report must be submitted to the commissioner of education and to the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees with jurisdiction over prekindergarten through grade 12 education. The report must be filed with the Legislative Reference Library according to section [3.195](#).

39. Other Provisions

- When a grant includes the production of a report or other publication and this publication may be posted on the Minnesota Department of Education's website, that document must adhere to all department communication's policies, available upon request from the Communication Division.
- The grantee shall cooperate with the state when enforcing applicable Minnesota Office of Grants Management policies and statutes.
- Grantees funded with federal funding must follow CFR 200.308, Revision of Budget and Program or as approved in the OGAN or other award documentation.
- Grantees and subcontractors receiving grants exceeding \$100,000 must comply with all applicable standards, orders, or requirements under Section 306 of the Clean Air Act, Section 508 of the Clean Water Act and Environmental Protection Agency regulations (40 CFR, part 15).
- The grantee must promptly return to the state any unexpended funds that have not been accounted for in a financial report to the state due at grant closeout.
- The grantee shall comply with any and all provisions of the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA).
- Grantees will submit reports and comply with the terms as outlined in the OGAN, other award document and relevant legislation.

ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND

Regional Library System Grant Program Application

1. Please describe how your regional library system anticipates using its state fiscal year 2024 ACHF allocation to achieve the goals of the ACHF legislation, which are to provide educational opportunities in the arts, history, literary arts and cultural heritage of Minnesota.

GRRL plans to continue offering programming/events planned by local branch staff, as well as regionally-planned events (tours). In general, events consist of art workshops, music performances, history presentation, theatre performances, author presentations, and performances for children that are artistic in nature.

2. Will your organization use ACHF funds for administrative costs? Please check yes or no.

Yes

No

If yes, please identify the amount you anticipate spending on administration on the budget form. Please briefly describe how your organization's ACHF administrative funds are used:

Administrative costs help GRRL offset time spent by administrative staff on activities related to these events (advertising/promotion, accounting, and planning time).

3. Does your organization intend to subgrant ACHF Funds? Please check yes or no.

Yes

No

If yes, please identify the amount you anticipate subgranting under "Other" on the budget form. Please briefly describe your organization's subgranting process(es).

4. Authorizing legislation requires recipients to measure the outcomes of ACHF projects. Expected outcomes are described in the Legislative Guide. These include, but are not limited to:
- Arts, culture and history will be interwoven into every facet of community life.
 - Increased Minnesotans of all ages, ethnicities, abilities and incomes who participate in the arts, culture and history.
 - Increased student exposure to professional performing arts, and the work of professional artists.
 - Increased knowledge and awareness of the way that history affects people's lives and how that knowledge can help people make informed decisions for the future.

Outcomes of ACHF projects must be reported to the Legislative Coordinating Commission for inclusion on the Legacy website. Required reporting asks for both proposed and realized outcomes as well as participation/attendance.

Briefly describe how you plan to establish, track and measure outcomes for ACHF projects based on reporting requirements. Indicate how you will evaluate success in achieving ACHF outcomes as described on page 11 of the ACHF Legislative Guide.

Feedback surveys are available at every GRRL program, specific to gathering attendees' changes in attitude, behavior, knowledge, etc. after Arts & Cultural Heritage programs; feedback is reviewed regularly and compiled annually to ensure intended outcomes are being met.

5. Please share any additional information about how the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund will contribute to your capacity to offer arts, history, literary arts and cultural heritage learning experiences to Minnesotans.

This funding is vital to GRRL being able to provide high quality arts, culture, and history programming to our communities, especially to bring culturally relevant programming led by experts in their fields. GRRL is able to offer a huge variety and number of programs that we would not otherwise be able to fund—art workshops, lectures, presentations, performances, and more.

Thank you for completing the FY2024 ACHF application.

**ARTS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE FUND (ACHF)
REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM
BUDGET APPLICATION FORM**

State Fiscal Year 2024 (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)



Regional library system name: Great River Regional Library

Full-time equivalents (FTE) funded with ACHF: 0

Use the total FTE represented by all regional library system staff--both program administration and other--who will be paid using ACHF. Calculated as total # hours planned divided by 2,080.

Budget items (used to create Financial Reporting Form)	Expenditures	Notes
Statewide initiative (up to 10%)	\$0.00	
Administration (2.5%)	\$5,765.48	
Other (auto sums from info entered below)	\$224,853.91	
TOTAL	\$230,619.39	

Other estimated expenses (will be included above)	Expenditures	Notes
Contracted services	\$218,853.91	
Personnel	\$6,000.00	
Subgrants	\$0.00	
<i>(Other--please specify; insert rows as needed)</i>	\$0.00	
Total Other	\$224,853.91	



Application Coversheet

Federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant Opportunity Application Federal Year 2023 – State Fiscal Year 2024

Applicant Information

Legal name of applicant organization: Great River Regional Library

Address: 1300 West Saint Germain Street

City, state and ZIP code + 4: Saint Cloud, MN 56301-3414

If district or charter school applicant, enter organization number:

Benefiting public library, if applicant is a fiscal agent:

Library type

Academic library

Library consortium or cooperative

X Public library

School library

Special library

Total LSTA grant funds requested: \$34,300

Identified Official with Authority (IOwA)

Name of official with authority to sign: Karen Pundsack

Title (Library Director/Administrator/Fiscal Agent/Board President): Executive Director

Phone number: 320-650-2512

Email: karenp@grrl.lib.mn.us

Library Director Information (If not IOwA)

Name of Library Director:

Phone number and email:

Required Identification Numbers

Minnesota SWIFT vendor ID number: 0000193523

Federal UEI number: K869RN4FKEP3

Registered 501(c)(3)? Enter Yes or No: Yes

Congressional District(s):

1st

2nd

3rd

4th

5th

X 6th

X 7th

8th

Primary Program Contact Information

Name of Program Contact: Karen Pundsack

Title: Executive Director

Phone number: 320-650-2512

Email: karenp@grrl.lib.mn.us

Business Manager Contact Information

Name of business manager: Amy Anderson

Title: Associate Director - Accounting

Phone number: 320-650-2541

Email: amya@grrl.lib.mn.us

Signature Section

Submit the completed and signed application coversheet, along with the application narrative, to mde.compgrants@state.mn.us by July 14, 2023 no later than 5 p.m. central time.

Signature the Identified Official with Authority

By signing below, I certify I have read the application (narrative, assurances, budget and supplemental documents, if applicable) and will comply with the approved application and assurances herein and additional state, local, federal regulations and policies that apply to my organization.

Name: Karen Pundsack

Date: July 14, 2023

Signature: 

Signature of the Library Director

Signature of Library Director if the library director is **not** Identified Official with Authority (IOWA). By signing below, I certify I have read the application (narrative, assurances, budget and supplemental documents, if applicable) and will comply with the approved application and assurances herein and additional state, local, federal regulations and policies that apply to my organization.

Name:

Date:

Signature: _____

Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act

Respond to the following two questions if your potential federal grant award will come from **federal funding** and be \$30,000 and over **and**, if your gross income is \$300,000 or more from all sources for the previous tax year. This information is required in order for us to meet our reporting requirements under the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA).

1. In your organization's preceding fiscal year, did the organization receive 80 percent or more of its annual gross revenues in U.S. federal contracts, subcontracts, loans, grants, sub-grants, and/or cooperative agreements; and \$25,000,000 or more in annual gross revenues from U.S. federal contracts, subcontracts, loans, grants, sub-grants, and/or cooperative agreements?

Yes

X No

2. If you answered **yes** to the question above, does the public have access to information about the compensation of the executives in your organization through periodic reports filed under section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934?

Yes

No

If you responded **no** to question 2, we may need additional information from you for reporting.

Application Narrative Section

Provide a narrative response in the space provided directly after each component below. Refer to the instructions section for additional information. A response is expected for each item listed within each component. Your complete application should consist of the following:

- Completed and signed application coversheet, assurances and narrative
- Completed Partnership Plan
- Excel Budget with descriptions – separate budget form

Project Title: Amplifying Diverse Central Minnesota Voices to Improve Future Access

Please select a project name that distinguishes the proposed project from broad activity areas. For example, “Teen e-Reader Book Club” rather than “e-Readers for Teens” or “21st Century Digital Literacy and Job Skills” rather than “Computer Classes.”

LSTA Sub-goal Identification

This project will address LSTA Five-Year (2023-2027) Plan Goals A: Building Coalitions to Increase Collective Impact, B: Partnering for Reimagined Access C: Refining Narratives to Showcase LSTA-Funded Library Contributions to Thriving Communities. Select **one** sub-goal that best describes your proposed project.

Goal A: Building Coalitions to Increase Collective Impact

State Library Services will lead the way for libraries to come together to strategically create networks across the state to forward the work of libraries and librarians in meeting community needs. These initiatives promote equity for diverse populations across the state, including increased support for tribal library programs.

Sub-goal A2: Developing staff through connection

Through creatively developing strategic connections across the library workforce in Minnesota, SLS will redistribute opportunities to accelerate progress towards library goals and equitable access. This approach will be multi-layered, allowing each type of stakeholder to have opportunities to connect.

Goal B: Partnering for Reimagined Access

State Library Services will strategically engage in community and government partnerships to reduce or eliminate barriers to information access for all Minnesotans.

Sub-goal B1: Community and Government Partnerships

Pursuing community and government partnerships intentionally is a means through which libraries can better serve more Minnesotans. Methods of evaluation and assessment will help SLS determine which partnerships are mutually beneficial and which are not.

X Sub-goal B2: Reducing Barriers to Library Access

State Library Services will help libraries plan, develop, and implement innovative library services and technologies to reduce barriers to access for all Minnesotans. Libraries will continue to be community anchors that support a higher quality of life for all Minnesotans. The strategic partnerships developed through project B1 will create innovative access channels and assist communities in using library resources.

Goal C: Changing the Narrative to Showcase Libraries' Contributions to Thriving Communities

Library services are in a constant state of evolution and have new opportunities to share these developments widely and clearly. SLS will refine and target messaging around libraries to build cohesion, create shared goals, and communicate libraries' value.

Sub-goal C2: Investing in the Future of the Library Workforce

SLS will partner with educational institutions and career development organizations to promote librarianship as a desirable career pathway. This work will ensure that library staff represent the diverse populations they serve.

Executive Summary (not scored)

Provide a brief overview of the proposed project and describe how it will address the LSTA sub-goal you selected. The executive summary will be used to announce your project if it is selected to receive a grant award. A response is required; however, no points are assigned for this section. 100-300 words recommended. The summary should describe:

- Audience that will be served
- Need your project addresses
- Overarching proposed project goals
- Activities you plan to implement that align with the purpose of funding
- Expected outcomes/products/outputs/benefits

Answer:

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) seeks to enhance efforts to offer effective and welcoming library service. This project will help GRRL better understand the needs of residents who are underserved by the library. In spring 2023, GRRL worked with St. Cloud State University to conduct a user survey. Participation from key demographic groups was limited. These key groups include people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants/refugees, Millennials, and senior citizens. With this grant, GRRL will hire consultants to engage individuals from these key populations. Through focus groups and individual interviews, GRRL will learn more about how to make library services more effective and welcoming. Participants will be asked how they would like to access services and why they would access them. The project will involve discussions of current community needs and barriers to library service. The qualitative and quantitative feedback will guide efforts for library service improvements. GRRL aims to enhance service so people in our communities can find and use trusted information they need to thrive.

Priority Points

Applicants (including benefitting public libraries) that have not received a competitive LSTA award with federal fiscal year 2022 or 2023 funds and since July 1, 2022, will receive an additional 10 competitive priority points.

Has applicant/benefiting public library received an LSTA-funded grant award since July 1, 2022, and with (federal fiscal year 2022 or 2023 funds) from the Minnesota Department of Education? MDE staff will confirm this prior to awarding priority points.

Yes (0 points added)

No (10 points added)

Unsure (MDE will review and assign points)

Reviewed and Scored Section – 100 Points Possible

Advancing Equity – 30 points maximum

Primary Audience:

Identify the primary audiences that will be served by the proposed project.

All ages

0-5 years

6-12 years

13-17 years

18-25 years

26-49 years

50-59 years

60-69 years

70+ years

American Indian or Alaska Native

Asian

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander

Urban

Suburban

Rural

Intergenerational groups (excluding families)

Families

Immigrants/refugees

Low income

Unemployed

X People with disabilities

Library staff, volunteers and/or trustees

People with limited functional literacy or informational skills

Need

Describe the need for this project and identify the primary audience (targeted group) who will benefit from the project goals and activities, as they relate to the LSTA sub-goal you selected. Please provide a detailed description of the audience that will be served by the proposed project. Describe how your grant project serves diverse populations, and especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities. This can include how the project addresses geographic diversity within and across Minnesota - including greater MN, urban/metro. A complete response will include the following:

- Demonstrate the needs of the audience by describing additional characteristics of the population as clearly as possible, using data when possible. For example: racial and ethnic communities, including American Indians; LGBTQIA+ communities; older adults; people with a specific disability; people experiencing homelessness; people who are incarcerated or on parole; veterans; immigrants, etc.
- Outline barriers faced in serving the targeted patron groups.
- Explain activities to address these barriers in order to provide services to the targeted patron groups.
- Describe how your project will contribute to more equitable library service for the community or state.
- Briefly explain the services and/or resources that this project will provide, touching on how the proposed project addresses identified needs of the targeted audience. Funded projects are required to provide services to patrons as opposed to only providing resources.
- Outline at least one intended goal or outcome that addresses the LSTA sub-goal selected

Answer:

The groups targeted with this project are residents of the service area of Great River Regional Library (GRRL) who are underserved by the library, including people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants/refugees, Millennials, and senior citizens.

GRRL is a consolidated public library system serving a population of over 500,000 residents with 90,000 registered borrowers in the counties of Benton, Morrison, Sherburne, Stearns, Todd and Wright in Central Minnesota. The region covers 4,880 square miles. The St. Cloud metro area has a population of approximately 189,000 residents and is the urban location of our regional headquarters which is housed in our largest library. Our other libraries in the region serve both suburban and rural communities. GRRL has a long history of expanding successful projects and services to all 32 communities with libraries within the region.

Needs

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) patrons form a diverse group of ages, races, ethnicities, abilities, and income levels. Based on U.S. Census data, four of GRRL's six counties (Benton, Morrison, Todd, and Stearns) have poverty rates above 10 percent. Several communities (Long Prairie, Melrose, Waite Park, Cold Spring,

and St. Cloud) have sizable populations who are not fluent in English, particularly Latinos and Somalis. Approximately eight percent of GRRL residents are people of color. It is estimated that 53 percent of the students are children of color in the St. Cloud school district, one of the region's largest. Roughly 12 percent of residents have some type of disability. According to Minnesota Compass statistics, the number of foreign-born residents in the area has more than doubled since 2000. Demographic projections for the GRRL region show diversity will grow substantially in the coming years.

With this growth, there is a demonstrated need to serve a broader audience.

Barriers

To identify barriers to library access faced by community members, GRRL conducted the Charities Review Council's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) survey in October 2020 and April 2022. The study examined GRRL's People, Processes, and Power. The survey was sent to library staff, library users, and community stakeholders.

Feedback from survey participants was that the language used in Charities Review Council's DEI survey was confusing and complex. This negatively impacted the response rate and survey validity. Survey response was lower in 2022 than when it was administered by GRRL in 2020 in spite of a similar method of distribution.

In both instances, lack of survey participation from people of color was apparent in the results. In 2020, 91 percent of respondents identified as White/European descent. Of the total respondents, 86 percent identified as female. Less than two percent identified as any other race/ethnicity category. No respondents to the survey indicated they needed accommodations to participate or benefit from library services and three percent indicated a family member did. Results in 2022 were even lower.

The most relevant information we have is from the DEI survey responses. Half of the respondents to the DEI survey were staff members. Staff responses represented over one-third of the total staff. The skewed demographics of the respondents demonstrate the lack of diversity of GRRL staff as a whole – primarily white, female and over the age of 36.

In the DEI survey, 49 percent of respondents indicated the library does not explicitly and intentionally serve individuals or families who require accommodations to access services. Of those who said the library served this audience, most indicated this was through physical accommodations, such as curbside pickup of library materials or having ADA-compliant facilities.

To gain further insight, in 2021, a focus group of community leaders representing people of color were invited to provide input on their reactions to the survey. They also shared recommendations for GRRL to serve a wider range of people in our community. Members of the focus group emphasized the importance of seeing staff "who look like them" to make the library welcoming to a wider range of people. The recommendation was to educate the Board of Trustees and staff to understand how people from different populations experience library services. The experience with this focus group helped to demonstrate the need for qualitative information to enhance the quantitative survey measurements.

In 2023, GRRL contracted with the St. Cloud State University (SCSU) Survey Center to conduct a survey of current borrowers and expired borrowers. Over 5,200 people completed the survey. Participants in the 25-44- and 45-64-year-old age groups were more likely to rate their satisfaction as 'fair' or 'poor' than other

groups. White participants reported higher satisfaction than people of color. Young adults (ages 18-24), men, people of color, and households with disabilities were more likely to be former GRRL users.

Activities to address barriers

This project has two main strategies to address the barriers faced by the key demographic groups (Sub-goal B2). The 2023 SCSU survey participants were asked open-ended questions on how to improve library services. These responses will inform the questions asked of the project participants. The strategies are:

1. Conduct focus groups to gather in-depth qualitative data, getting at the questions of “how” and “why” people from underserved groups would like to access library services so the library can better serve them
2. Conduct interviews to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on a one-on-one basis to address the questions: 1) What are the community perceptions of the accessibility of library services and materials? and 2) What types of library services do community members need or desire? The answers to these questions will guide future services and can assist in better marketing current services to underserved populations.

Intended outcomes

The activities from this project address Sub-Goal B2: focus on community preferences and to reduce barriers to access to services and literacy for key demographic groups - people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants/refugees, millennials and senior citizens. The intended outcome is enhanced, more effective, and more welcoming library service, as well as create more awareness of current services offered that are relevant to underserved groups.

Project Plan, Activities and Estimated Timeline – 30 point maximum

Please describe your plan for implementing this project and outline the proposed project’s major activities to achieve the sub-goal selected. Funded projects are required to provide services to patrons as opposed to providing only resources. Include a timeline based on the anticipated grant period of October 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024.

A complete project plan will:

- Describe each major project activity, milestone and/or strategy in sufficient detail.
- Discuss how similar services/programs/activities have been effective in achieving outcomes related to the sub-goal selected.
- Demonstrate how each major project activity will help to achieve your project’s intended outcomes.
- If you have a partner(s), describe the role of partner organization(s) in project activities. Your description of partner roles should align with the Project Partnership Agreement (PPA). Partnerships or collaborations with community-based organizations are an LSTA program priority and encouraged, but not required, for this grant opportunity.

- Discuss where project activities will take place and how the community will be engaged, including marketing and outreach to the primary audience. Describe how you will ensure your outreach strategies and communications method are inclusive and culturally appropriate.
- Provide anticipated outputs for each major project activity. If your proposed project involves instruction, for example, your outputs may include the length and number of training sessions, attendance, curriculum developed. *Please note: If your project is selected for funding, State Library Services will work with you to determine if additional outputs need to be tracked for federal reporting purposes.*

Project components may include and are not limited to planning, purchasing, hiring and/or contracting, implementation of activities, provision of patron services, programs, evaluation, etc.

A complete timeline will:

- Identify major project components.
- Provide estimated dates of completion.
- Identify responsible parties.

Answer:

Great River Regional Library (GRRL) will take a team approach to reach the desired outcomes. Our internal team of library staff will work with the consultants to coordinate logistics, such as meeting locations and general communications. GRRL team members will assist with identifying possible focus group and interview participants. We will work with external expert consultants to conduct focus groups and interviews to make recommendations for service improvements to the Leadership Support Team and GRRL Board of Trustees.

GRRL staff expertise/core program team bios:

Karen Pundsack, Executive Director, has served as director for Great River Regional Library, a six-county consolidated regional public library system headquartered in St. Cloud, since 2015. She has worked in Minnesota public libraries for over 20 years and in library administration for 14 years. She is a St. Cloud State University mass communications alumna and holds an MLIS from the School of Information Studies at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee. As director, she has led diversity, equity and inclusion and evaluation efforts at GRRL.

Beth Ringsmuth Stolpman, Patron Services Specialist, has worked in libraries for nearly 25 years. She is responsible for library programs and events for GRRL, with a special interest in outcome-based planning. Beth has a Bachelor of Arts in English from St. Cloud State University and obtained her MLIS from Dominican University via the St. Catherine University program in St. Paul, MN. She coordinates the library's Arts & Cultural Heritage Funds and has managed many successful grant-funded projects.

Breanne Fruth, Communications and Development Coordinator, holds a Bachelor of Arts from St. Catherine University in 2017 in Communication Studies and a minor in Nonprofit Strategies and Development. Breanne has spent five years doing marketing, social media, fundraising, and communications with Great River Regional Library. She is the local chapter president of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and has led the library in fundraising growth.

Possible consulting firms

We will build on past efforts to reach underserved communities and advance diversity, equity and inclusion at GRRL. We plan to use consulting firms that know and understand the library region because of past experience. They have expertise in conducting focus groups and interviews with people from various communities:

- Wilder Research – a division of the Wilder Foundation (<https://www.wilder.org/wilder-research>). Wilder’s mission is to strengthen organizations and communities through research. They help agencies better understand community trends, identify needs and solutions at the policy, community and program level, measure program effectiveness and increase public awareness of issues. Through American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding, GRRL worked with Wilder Research to develop a logic model and program evaluation plan in 2021. The effort was a step toward evaluating program and service effectiveness post-COVID. Contracting with Wilder Research to conduct focus groups, individual interviews, and data analysis is an extension of this work.
- Filsan Talent Partners – a St. Cloud-based diversity, equity and inclusion firm which offers research services among diverse cultural groups, including focus groups and individual interviews (<https://www.filsantalentpartners.com>). Hudda Ibrahim is also a local Somali author who has provided programs at our library system, including Dine and Dialogue, a series of community discussions. Through a previous LSTA grant, we worked with this firm to offer cross cultural and implicit bias training to library staff members. The firm also reviewed GRRL hiring processes and job descriptions to help recruit a more diverse workforce. We have seen an observable increase in the diversity of applicants and new hires since making these changes. Working with Filsan Talent Partners will provide an experienced local connection to diverse voices in Central Minnesota.

Project activity 1: Focus groups

Focus groups will be conducted to gather in-depth qualitative data. The goal is to have in-person focus groups with eight to 12 participants or virtual focus groups with six to eight participants. The participants will be grouped based on similar traits, experiences or demographics. The 2023 User Survey conducted by St. Cloud State University will form the basis for deeper discussions with participants. We aim to conduct two to three focus groups for each type of participant group to develop a thematic analysis. Each focus group will last around 90 minutes to two hours. We will work with consultants to develop the questions and protocols. We will also work with local community organizations serving populations of interest to help with recruitment. Compensation will be provided to these organizations for recruitment efforts. Per best practices for focus group participants to be compensated for their time, a stipend will be provided to each participant. Evaluation will address:

- What are community perceptions of the accessibility of library services and materials?
- Who is not accessing library services and materials? How could library services and materials be more accessible to community members?
- To what extent has patron access to library services and materials increased?

- What types of library services do community members need or desire? Particularly for key demographic groups?
- How can the library increase access to library services and materials for those who need it?
- How can the library increase awareness of current services that may be relevant for those who need it? How can we better advertise or reach patrons about our current offerings?

Project activity 2: Individual interviews

Individual interviews will be conducted to collect quantitative and qualitative data from community organizations serving populations of interest. The 2023 User Survey conducted by St. Cloud State University will form the basis for deeper discussions with participants. Ideally, the interviews will last 30 to 60 minutes. GRRL will work with consultants to create the interview protocol. We aim to recruit at least 10 participants. Evaluation will address:

- What are community perceptions of the accessibility of library services and materials?
- What types of library services do community members need or desire? Particularly for key demographic groups?
- Where do participants obtain information about library services?

Project activity 3: Data analysis and evaluation

Following completion of the focus groups and individual interviews, the consultants will compile qualitative and quantitative data collected. They will create a codebook, coding and thematic analysis of the data gathered. Themes from each project activity will be compiled in a summary report. The information will be used to craft recommendations to make library services more effective and welcoming. Service improvements will reduce barriers to access for GRRL patrons. These recommendations will be shared with the Leadership Support Team and GRRL Board of Trustees, and eventually will be incorporated into the work of all library staff.

Estimated Project Timeline

Project component	Start-end date of completion	Responsible Party	Measurement
Contract with consultants to develop the questions and protocols for focus groups and individual interviews.	Goal to have consultant chosen by November 2023 with a project completion date of April 2024	Karen Pundsack	Consulting firm hired. Focus groups, individual interviews scheduled. Scope of data analysis and evaluation finalized.
Focus groups	January - March 2024	Hired consultants – logistics facilitated by Beth Ringsmuth Stolpman and Breanne Fruth	Number of focus groups conducted and number of participants. Data collected from focus group participants to be analyzed and evaluated.
Individual interviews	January - March 2024	Hired consultants – logistics facilitated by Beth Ringsmuth Stolpman and Breanne Fruth	Number of individual interviews conducted. Data collected from focus group participants to be analyzed and evaluated.
Data analysis and evaluation	April 2024	Hired consultants	Quantitative and qualitative data analyses collected. Themes from focus groups and individual interviews compiled. Recommendations developed.
Recommendations to Leadership Support Team and GRRL Board of Trustees	Presentations to Leadership Support Team and GRRL Board of Trustees May 2024	Karen Pundsack	Evaluation summary and insights shared at a Leadership Support Team meeting and presented at the May 2024 GRRL Board of Trustees meeting.

Outcomes and Evaluation – 20 point maximum

Please describe what changes – skills, knowledge, behavior or attitudes – you expect to see in the project’s primary audience. How will the proposed services/resources help participants achieve this project’s intended outcomes?

A complete response will:

- Describe the intended change in participants, even if it extends beyond the project’s time frame.
- Discuss how the project activities are designed to result in changes in participants.
- Describe how the intended change in participants will be measured during the grant period.
- Describe how information gathered during the grant period will be evaluated to consider the project’s effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Answer:

This project will answer the following questions:

- What are community perceptions of the accessibility of library services and materials?
- Who is not accessing library services and materials? How could library services and materials be more accessible to community members?
- To what extent has patron access to library services and materials increased?
- What types of library services do community members need or desire? Particularly for key demographic groups?
- How can the library increase access to library services and materials for those who need it?

Intended Changes

The project is intended to develop recommendations that will improve access for GRRL patrons who struggle with barriers to service. By implementing recommendations formed from direct user feedback, the library aims to increase usage from people from underserved demographics and see improved reports of access. Success will be measured by future iterations of the GRRL User survey from St. Cloud State University. It will also be measured by the number of recommendations implemented in the year following the project.

Changes in Participants

The project activities are designed to result in changes in participants by engaging with those participants directly and getting their unfiltered input on library services. GRRL has struggled to garner this level of input from underserved communities in the past. Through the grant, GRRL could offer stipends to focus group and interview participants. This is the added incentive recommended by Wilder Research in the program evaluation plan developed for GRRL in 2021.

Changes Measured

During the grant period, the level of participation, number of focus groups and interviews conducted will be a measure of change in participants. Since we have had multiple past attempts at engaging diverse voices through surveys and limited focus groups, meeting the participation goals for focus groups and individual interviews will be a quantitative measure of change. Being able to recruit participants from each targeted group will be another measure of change.

Information Gathered

The qualitative and quantitative feedback gathered from the project activities during the grant period will result in service improvement recommendations. The feasibility of those recommendations will be the measure of this project's effectiveness.

Sustainability and Organizational Capacity – 10 points maximum

Describe your agency's capacity for and commitment to administering the project successfully. Identify primary project staff (employees) and their role in this project. Please describe how the proposed project will help the applicant better respond to the need(s) of the primary audience over time.

A complete response will describe how the proposed project:

- Increases the applicant's capacity to serve the primary audience.
- Contributes to stronger relationships with community organizations, including project partner(s), if applicable.
- Will impact future library-based services to other library users.
- Will contribute to more equitable services in the community or state.
- Will be sustained beyond the grant period, as appropriate.

Answer:

This project will help expand GRRL's capacity to respond to its increasingly diverse communities by getting firsthand input on serving groups that are currently underserved by the public library. Being able to garner qualitative feedback following the 2023 St. Cloud State University (SCSU) survey will enhance the region's ability to tailor services and focus resources to people of color, people with disabilities, immigrants/refugees, Millennials (ages 26-42) and senior citizens. The 2023 SCSU survey has demonstrated that these groups currently have the lowest satisfaction with library services.

GRRL will work with United Way/Partner for Student Success to connect with members of their Somali Network and Black Youth Network to reach potential focus group and interview participants. GRRL has a long history of working with this organization as a collaborative partner on the 21st Century Learning Grant they have received. Partnering with this organization to gather additional feedback about the library would be a natural extension of this ongoing work.

By improving access to these specific groups, GRRL can make library services more welcoming and inclusive for all users. GRRL will be positioned to assess and adapt library services to respond to the unique needs in each community. This, in turn, will improve our ability to serve increasingly diverse communities in our six-county area.

Excel Budget and Descriptions – 10 points maximum

Complete the Excel spreadsheet and submit as an attachment to the grant application.

A complete Budget and Descriptions document will identify and describe all grant-funded and cost share expenditures. All proposed project expenditures must be reasonable, necessary and allocable to this project. Please refer to the grant instructions for additional information. Refer to Appendix A at the end of the instruction document for detailed information on each line item.

Project Partners

Name of Partner Organization(s): United Way of Central Minnesota/Partner for Student Success.

Reminder: Partnerships and collaboration with community-based organizations are an LSTA program priority and are **encouraged but not required** for this grant opportunity. Please submit a signed [Project Partnership Agreement](#) for each identified partnership with your application. Funding decisions may be impacted by missing agreements or agreements that do not clearly describe the relationship and partner contributions.

Application Materials

Required – Completed and signed Cover Sheet, Assurances, and Application Narrative Responses

Required – Completed Excel Budget and Descriptions

Applications submitted without a completed budget plan and justification will be disqualified and not passed on for review.

Required (If Applicable) – Project Partnership Agreement(s)

A completed [Project Partnership Agreement](#) for all partner(s) identified in your narrative must be submitted with the application. Funding decisions may be impacted by missing agreements or agreements that do not clearly describe the relationship and partner contributions.

Required (If Applicable) – Agreement Letter or Copy of Fiscal Agent Agreement

If you are a fiscal agent applicant representing a public library, MDE will need a letter of agreement or copy of the fiscal agent agreement prior to the execution of a grant award.

Required (If Applicable) – Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate

If your budget includes a federally negotiated indirect cost rate, please include a copy of the approval letter from the federal agency. Public School Districts and Charter Schools do not need to send agreement; MDE already has these on file.

Optional – Vendor Quotes for Capital Expenditures

To expedite the pre-approval process, you may include vendor quotes and product specifications for proposed purchases with a per-item-cost of \$5,000 and greater.

Submission Reminder:

A complete application submission will include: Application (application coversheet, assurances, narrative), Budget, Partnership Agreements (if applicable), Fiscal Agent Agreement letter (if applicable), Indirect Cost Rate approval letter (if applicable), and the optional Vendor Quotes must be submitted through email to mde.compgrants@state.mn.us by **July 14, 2023 at 5 p.m., Central Daylight Time**.

DO NOT COMPLETE OR DELETE THIS WORKSHEET

Summary Budget

Applicant: Great River Regional Library

Cost Code	Budget Item Descriptions	LSTA Funds	Cost Share
100 Series	Salaries and Wages	\$0.00	\$0.00
200 Series	Fringe Benefits	\$0.00	\$0.00
303	Consultant Services: /portion of each contract UP TO \$25,000	\$24,800.00	\$0.00
304	Consultant Services: /portion of each contract EXCEEDING \$25,000	\$0.00	\$0.00
303	Other Purchased Services: /portion of each contract UP TO \$25,000	\$0.00	\$0.00
304	Other Purchased Services: /portion of each contract EXCEEDING \$25,000	\$5,500.00	\$0.00
320	Telecommunication Services	\$0.00	\$0.00
329	Postage and Parcel Services	\$0.00	\$0.00
366	Staff Travel In-State	\$0.00	\$0.00
368	Staff Travel Out-of-State	\$0.00	\$0.00
370	Rental of Meeting Rooms	\$0.00	\$0.00
401	Supplies and Materials - Non-Instructional	\$0.00	\$0.00
405	Non-Instructional Software Licensing	\$0.00	\$0.00
455	Non-Instructional Non-Capitalized Technology Related Supplies	\$0.00	\$0.00
465	Non-Instructional Technology Devices	\$0.00	\$0.00
466	Instructional Technology Devices	\$0.00	\$0.00
470	Library Media Resources	\$0.00	\$0.00
490	Meals for Workshop Trainings	\$0.00	\$0.00
530	Other Equipment Purchased	\$0.00	\$0.00
555	Non-Instructional Technology Related Hardware	\$0.00	\$0.00
556	Instructional Technology Related Hardware	\$0.00	\$0.00
820	Online Liscensed Resources	\$0.00	\$0.00
899	Other Expenditures	\$0.00	\$0.00
895	Indirect Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Project Cost		\$30,300.00	\$0.00

End of Worksheet