Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund

Keystone Grants for Public Library Facilities: General Guidelines

July 2024

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
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Keystone Grant 2025

The Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) Office of Commonwealth Libraries is accepting applications from eligible applicants for grants to improve the physical facilities of state-aided public libraries.

- Grants may be requested up to a maximum of $750,000.
- There is no minimum amount that may be requested.
- Grant amounts may not exceed 50 percent of the total project cost.
- Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis by PDE and guided by an assessment of the applicant's needs, funding priorities, and grant award criteria.
- Grant payments will be made on a reimbursement basis.

All applications must be submitted via the eGrants platform no later than 12 noon on Thursday, October 17, 2024. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. Awarded projects will be expected to begin and complete within the following 18-month grant performance period: April 1, 2025-September 30, 2026. Application contents should reflect this time frame where applicable.

Source of Grant Funds

State grants for library facilities are available through the Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund and are administered by PDE.

Matching Requirements

Keystone Grants must be matched dollar-for-dollar. Matching funds may include cash and in-kind contributions, federal funds, and other state funds. Documentation of the matching funds must be clearly identified in the application. Any special conditions attached to these funds must be explained. Carefully read the program regulations (22 Pa Code § Chapter 124 - Grants for Public Library Facilities) in Appendix A for additional information concerning matching funds. Sufficient funds to complete the entire project must be documented and available at the time of application.

Eligible Applicants

Grant applications are required to be submitted by a municipality on behalf of the project library. The sponsoring municipality and the board of the state-aided public library should cooperatively develop the application materials.

Sponsoring Municipality

Keystone Grant applications will be accepted from municipalities, defined as: "Any county, city, borough, incorporated town, township, home rule municipality or any official agency created by the fore-going units of government under the laws of this Commonwealth (22 Pa Code §

142.1)." PDE will accept applications from Councils of Governments (COG) and authorities. However, an application from a COG or an authority must be approved by the participating local governing bodies of the COG or authority.

Libraries that are organized as authorities must have one of the participating local governing bodies of the authority act as the sponsoring municipality and applicant.

To be eligible to apply for a Keystone Grant, a municipality must sponsor a public library. The municipality, alone or in cooperation with other municipalities, must make appropriations out of current revenue or out of monies raised by the levy of special taxes to establish and/or maintain a public library. The municipality may directly provide the service by including the public library within the municipal government structure or may delegate responsibility for public library service to a board of directors or to a nonprofit corporation.

Sponsoring School District
Some Pennsylvania public libraries are supported by school districts. The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Act does not permit school districts to apply directly for grants. When a state-aided public library is sponsored by a school district, a municipality that is located (in whole or in part) in that school district may apply for a grant on behalf of that school district for that public library. In this case, the application should be signed by governing bodies of both the school district and the municipality.

Shared Facilities
In the case of shared facilities, Keystone Grants and related matching funds may pay only for the portion of the building to be used as a state-aided public library. The application should clearly identify the portion of the project directly affecting the library. The application should clearly calculate the square footage of library occupancy of the facility. The project cost amount eligible for Keystone funding will be that percentage of the total cost. The total project cost will be for the entire project work, including non-library spaces.

Eligible Project Types
- **Planning –** Master site development plans, feasibility studies, maintenance, management plans, and other plans and documents, including long-range plans for the allocation of grants, useful to municipalities and state agencies in the planning, development, operation, protection and management of their public library facilities and programs.
- **Acquisition –** The purchase or lease with an option to purchase land or buildings for public library use.
- **Development –** New construction, improvement, alteration or renovation required for and compatible with the physical development, improvement of land or buildings for public library purposes.
- **Rehabilitation –** The improvement or restoration, excluding routine maintenance, of existing public library facilities.

Examples of Eligible Projects:

- Construction of a new library building or expansion of an existing structure;
- Projects which make public library facilities accessible to persons with disabilities, such as Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible doors;
- Improvements to facilities, particularly where service to the general public is impeded, creating a public hazard or causing a hazard to the library collection. These projects may include: weatherization, roof repair, replacement doors, HVAC upgrades, gutter/downspouts, replacement windows, parking lots (if based on safety or accessibility), or lighting;
- Remodeling or renovation of existing buildings to demonstrably improve library service to the general public; and/or
- Projects supporting energy efficiency, including installation of efficient heating and air conditioning, window replacement, lighting upgrades, and other green building technologies or upgrades.

Ineligible Project Costs
- Operating costs of a public library, including costs of purchasing books or other library materials, personnel costs and costs of routine maintenance;
- Costs of equipment or software, or both, to automate public library functions and catalogs unless the automation is part of the development or rehabilitation of a public library facility;
- Planning, acquisition, development or rehabilitation of facilities that are not public libraries;
- In the case of shared facilities, the grant and related matching funds may pay only for the portion of the facility to be used as a public library;
- Renovation and/or expansion of parking lots, storage areas, and staff work flow modifications; and
- Purchase of equipment or furniture.

Application Evaluation Criteria
The following criteria are used to judge grant applications:

1. Keystone Priorities
The project meets one or more of the following priorities of the grant program:

- Energy efficient projects;
- ADA requirements;
- Non-routine maintenance or mechanical system upgrades;
- New building construction or additions, and/or interior renovation/remodeling, which provide additional space and/or demonstrably improve library service to the general public;
- The public library serves an area with a high unemployment rate, low personal income or low property value and meets the eligibility requirements for Equalization Aid by serving the most economically distressed communities in the state;
- The library has not received a Keystone Grant in the last five years;

- The library is located in a geographical area which has previously not received a Keystone Grant; and/or
- The library has demonstrated good library/municipal communication and grant management, including timely reports on past Keystone Grant projects.

2. **Impact**
   - The project improves direct service to library users.

3. **Budget**
   - The total cost of the project is reasonable in relation to the anticipated results.

4. **Need**
   - The applicant demonstrates need for the project based on the library's goals and an analysis of the community's needs for and use of the library.
   - The applicant demonstrates that the project cannot be realized without the Keystone Grant.

5. **Readiness**
   - The local matching and grant funds will be sufficient to complete the proposed project within a reasonable time frame, normally 18 months or less, with good cause shown for projects expected to take longer.
   - The application demonstrates the applicant's readiness to proceed with project.

6. **Project Planning**
   - Adequate planning for the project is demonstrated, including an indication that the library board, system board (if a system member library), library director, district consultant librarian, and, if appropriate, an architect and library building consultant have been involved.
   - The building plan reflects good library practices, facilitate public service and include the capability of using advanced information technology.

Application Procedures

Application
   - An application is submitted by the municipality on behalf of the library.
   - The application is completed and submitted electronically on the eGrants platform. You must follow instructions for filling out all required questions and provide all required attachments.
   - Applicants should review the PHMC/SHPO section of the application as quickly as possible to determine whether a review form should be submitted to PHMC using the provided links and instructions provided in the application. If applicable to your project, this approval is a required element of the application and obtaining it may depend on the schedule of PHMC.

- To be considered for review, the complete application must be submitted no later than **12 noon** on Thursday, **October 17, 2024.**

Review of Applications

Applications will be reviewed and scored by a team of reviewers. Reviewers will judge applications according to the criteria outlined above using a pre-established scoring rubric.

Post-Award Procedures

Applicants are expected to be notified of their award status in February 2025.

Contract

Applications, if approved, become part of a written contract between PDE's Office of Commonwealth Libraries and the grantee. The contract will include terms and conditions of the grant, the project budget, and the standard terms and conditions of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Funds granted must be expended solely for the stated purpose outlined in the application and in accordance with the terms of the project contract. Funds not expended shall be returned to the Commonwealth.

Bid Specifications and the Competitive Process

The project must be publicly advertised to ensure fair and equitable vendor participation. All local rules and procedures of the sponsoring municipality shall be followed for estimates, bid specifications, and the bidding process. Grantees should adhere to local bidding regulations and conduct a fair process through which a reasonable bid can be accepted. In order to speed up the grant process, bid specifications may be submitted with the application or any time thereafter. **Bid specifications must be submitted within 90 days after the contract start date.** All bid specifications must be approved by PDE's Office of Commonwealth Libraries before publicly advertising the project or announcing an invitation to bid.

Project Sign/News Releases

During the project period, the grantee must display a sign at the project site identifying the project and stating:

> "This project is supported in part through a grant from the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Pennsylvania Department of Education, with funds provided from the Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund."

All news releases about the project shall contain a similar phrase acknowledging the assistance of the Office of Commonwealth Libraries, Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the source of the funds.

Reporting and Payment

Reporting documentation will be made available to both the municipality and the library.

All grant recipients must submit **Quarterly Reports** beginning with the first full quarter after the fully executed date of the contract. The number of Quarterly Reports due will be dependent on the length of the project. If the municipal grantee approves, it is allowable for these quarterly reports to be completed and submitted by the Library.

The grant award total may be divided into one, two, or three benchmark amounts. When eligible project expenditures have reached a reimbursable amount shown on the Commonwealth's **General Invoice,** the grantee may submit supporting invoices and a request for payment.

A **Final Financial Summary** must be submitted by the municipality within 60 days of receiving your final reimbursement payment. Any late invoices not submitted with previously submitted forms must accompany the **Final Financial Summary,** which is a reconciliation of the total project cost. The amount of Keystone Grant funds requested for reimbursement may not exceed 50 percent of the total cost of the project. Any grant funds exceeding 50 percent of the final total cost of the project must be returned to the Commonwealth. A **Project Completion Report** must be submitted within 90 days of completing the project work. This report serves to close out the grant.

General Information

Grantees are required to keep separate bookkeeping records for the grant project in order to establish an audit trail. In the case of state funds, PDE reserves the right to audit the provision of services and the expenditure of funds. The grantee will provide the auditor selected by PDE with full and complete access to all records related to, and all persons and employees involved in, the performance of the contract.