



COUNCIL AGENDA: 5-03-05

ITEM:

2.7

# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR AND  
CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Jane Light

**SUBJECT:** GRANT APPLICATION TO THE  
CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

**DATE:** April 13, 2005

Approved

Date

4.18.05

**Council District:** Citywide

## RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a resolution authorizing the City Manager to submit a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant application to the California State Library, to execute all documents related to the application, and to accept the grant if awarded. The grant requests \$113,704 to fund the *Gateways to Literacy Project*, which would increase services at the Branch Libraries for low-level literacy adults and their families, and connect more adults with the formal literacy services of the Library's Partners in Reading Program.

## BACKGROUND

The California State Library awards Library Services and Technology Act funds annually on a competitive basis. LSTA funds provide local assistance to all types of libraries in a number of areas including serving adults with low-level literacy skills.

Based on national averages for adults functioning at the lowest levels of literacy (National Adult Literacy Survey) 185,000 adults in San José have difficulty with basic reading and writing skills. Branch libraries account for over 80% of all material checkouts, indicating that the majority of residents access library services through their local branch. Currently Partners in Reading is the primary adult literacy program offered by the Library and it occurs predominantly at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Library in downtown. For many low-level literacy adults, a lack of transportation and time restrict their involvement in reading and writing programs. Offering more services for low-level literacy adults and their families in the neighborhoods will make it easier for residents to access services.

## **ANALYSIS**

If LSTA funds are awarded the project will run from July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006. Branch Libraries will become gateways to literacy through the following project components:

- Increase staff understanding of the needs of low-level literacy adults and how to provide corresponding services through a comprehensive training program
- Pilot collections of books, media, and multi-media materials for low-level literacy adults at three Branch Libraries
- Offer programs in the Branches for low-level literacy adults/families
- Establish new, or strengthen current relationships with community based organizations serving this clientele
- Ensure low-level literacy adults/families receive their first library card
- Increase visibility in the community about the new Branch Library services and Partners in Reading

The project aligns with the needs assessment results and priorities of several community organizations including the United Way of Santa Clara County and FIRST 5 Santa Clara County.

The long-range outcome for the project is that adults with low-level literacy in San José will meet their personal goals through the Partners in Reading program. Short-term outcomes focus on increases in staff understanding of how to serve low-level literacy adults, customer satisfaction with the new programs, circulation statistics of the three new collections, new library cards issued, and increased referrals to Partners in Reading through the Branch Libraries.

## **OUTCOME**

If the Library receives the funds to implement the *Gateways to Literacy Project*, more adults in San José with low-level literacy skills and their families will receive informal literacy services at branch libraries and be connected to the Library's formal literacy program, Partners in Reading.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

This project design included input from participants in the Library's Partners in Reading program.

## **COORDINATION**

This memo was coordinated with the City Attorney's Office.

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**BUDGET REFERENCE**

If the California State Library approves the grant application, City Council approval of an appropriation ordinance amendment to the General Fund will be required prior to the expenditure of grant funds.

**CEQA**

Not a project.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane Light", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jane Light  
Library Director, Library Department