

# Public Library Infrastructure Grants



## Tips for applying

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

Guidelines are available at <https://pls.sl.nsw.gov.au/funding/public-library-grants>

Consultants' details are available at <https://pls.sl.nsw.gov.au/about/contact-us>

## Form

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

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

Please talk to a PLS Consultant if you have questions about the new form.

## IT Infrastructure Projects

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

## Digitisation projects

Digitisation projects with an infrastructure component are eligible under the program. Projects may include fit-out of a room or space for digitisation, equipment and the establishment of systems for digital storage and retrieval.

The Grant program does not support recurrent costs, however project costs may be included, noting that grant project reports are due on 30 June 2026. Project costs may include the cost of digitising specified collections for the life of the project.

Applicants should address how digitising will continue after the grant is expended.

As part of the application, applicants should describe the collections to be digitised, and include detail on how the project will adhere to Digital Practice Guidelines including selection, metadata and cataloguing, digital preservation etc.

## Creative Communities

Projects that help the library support the objectives of the NSW Government Creative Communities Policy are encouraged. These could include multifunctional flexible spaces to support writing workshops, events, artists, music etc.

Further information is available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/arts-and-culture/engage-nsw-arts-and-culture/resource-hub/creative-communities>

## Eligibility and reporting on previous grants

The grant guidelines state that:

*Applications will only be considered from councils that are up to date on reporting for all State Library grants and subsidies programs.*

This does not mean that you need to have all previous grants acquitted. You are eligible for a Public Library Infrastructure Grant if you have a previous grant project still underway, as long as your progress report has been submitted by the due date and any variations or extensions have been approved by the State Library.

If you do have an agreed extension to your project, this date must be after the closing date for the grant round that you are applying for. For example – if you are applying for a 2024/25 Public Library Infrastructure Grant the closing date is 25 October 2024 so any grants from previous years must have an extension at least until 25 October 2024.

If you are unsure if you have any overdue reports please contact Kate O’Grady [kate.ogradey@sl.nsw.gov.au](mailto:kate.ogradey@sl.nsw.gov.au)

## Amount of funding requested

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

## Supporting documents

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

Additional supporting evidence for grants between \$200,001 and \$500,000 is to be included, as appropriate:

- Detailed plans
- Development Application
- Detailed costings (possibly including quantity surveyor documentation)
- Matching funding
- Use of People Places guidelines and tools
- Reference to other relevant NSW public library standards

## Authorisation

The application form states:

ALL applications must be authorised by the General Manager of the submitting council and also be endorsed by the Library Manager or Branch Librarian / Branch Library Officer of that council. Where the application is a Regional application, the Regional Librarian must also endorse the application through a letter submitted with the application.

Make sure you have consulted with your GM about the project and application. By completing the authorisation section at the end of the application you are acknowledging that you are authorised to submit the application on behalf of your council and General Manager.

## Letters of support

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

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

## Matching funding

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

## Community need and benefit

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

## Council commitment

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

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

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

### Viability and sustainability

Viability and sustainability might include engaging with local groups to ensure that the project is suitable, promotion to ensure use of the resource into the future and financial commitment from council and/or a budget to maintain the project and resources beyond the initial grant funding.

### Staged projects

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

### Library building projects

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

### Determining library size

The Library building calculator is used to help you determine a suitable sized library for your community. It includes a population calculator, service calculator and renovation calculator. They can be found at <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/people-places/planning-tools/library-building-calculator>

Please talk to a PLS Consultant if you would like assistance using the calculator.

### Library refurbishment

All library refurbishments including requests for furniture and shelving are classed as building projects and applications should include the [People Places library building calculator](#). Talk to a Consultant if you have concerns about completing the forms. If a building falls below the recommended size this does not automatically mean that the

project will not be funded but it may not be as competitive as other applications for buildings that are of appropriate size for the community.

### Evaluation

You are required to evaluate your grant project as part of the acquittal process. You can include some description of evaluation in your application, possibly in project description, viability, or your timeline. Evaluation should include comparative statistics, surveys or feedback before and after your project. The Final Performance Report includes sections for evaluation.

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