

GATHERING IDEAS FOR FUTURE STATEWIDE PROJECTS

The Library Council of Washington is looking for your help in identifying ideas for the use of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding to meet statewide library needs and opportunities.

Project name (a short descriptive title)

Living Voters Guide Fact Checking with Libraries

Library, group, or person submitting proposal: The Seattle Public Library

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1. Briefly describe your idea for the use of LSTA funding (limit your response to approximately ½ page):

The Living Voters Guide (LVG) offers a new method for voters to become informed and deliberate together on critical election decisions. Users learn about ballot choices, express their values and concerns, weigh pros and cons submitted by other voters, explore common ground, and reach informed decisions. LVG fosters public trust in uncivil times by inviting citizens to talk with one another online as if talking across the fence in their back yards.

This civic software was developed by CityClub in partnership with a team of researchers from the University of Washington's Departments of Computer Science, Communication, Human-Centered Design, and Political Science. The initial work was funded by the National Science Foundation as part of a larger research project to design, build and test new software supporting civic engagement and participation. CityClub is now ready to transfer the technology from the university to the public sector. The intent is to find a sustainable institutional home for the LVG within public libraries.

- A fact-checking methodology and service whereby library staff can verify claims LVG participants make. This will provide the integrity/veracity that the public expects from a voters guide.

- Extensions to the LVG platform for fostering deliberation about candidates, supporting fact-checking activities, and expanding to multiple states. All source code developed under this grant will be contributed under an open source license.

- A wiki-based toolkit conveying the technical, operational and promotional information libraries would need to host LVG in their communities.

- A distributed technological infrastructure that can handle high volumes of traffic during election season from across the country, using cloud-based infrastructure to avoid high capital expenditure on servers and system administration.

2. Briefly describe why funding of this idea is important to the Washington library community (limit your response to approximately ½ page):

Public libraries are the natural home for LVG because they are trusted, neutral mediators of civic space, both digital and face to face. Also, libraries can play a variety of critical informational and facilitative roles, such as identifying and providing public information resources for elections and fact checking.

3. Briefly describe the outcome that is expected should the idea be funded. In other words, how will we know if the project has been successful and has achieved its goals? (limit your response to approximately ½ page):

Evaluation will be conducted with library staff and public users to measure participation volume, acquired knowledge, and behaviors against the desired outcomes of attracting voters to use libraries and LVG as primary resources for trusted election information; encountering a diversity of political ideas and opinions; civil deliberation with other voters; and making more informed decisions.

General Information

Which library types are intended as the primary beneficiaries of this project? (check all that apply)

- Academic (private and public two-year and four-year academic institutions)
 Public (libraries organized under RCW 27.12)
 School (private and public K-12 schools)
 Special (business and industry, law, medical, other government, tribal, other)
If other, specify: _____

The intended beneficiaries of the project? (check the primary beneficiary)

- Library staff
 Library users or potential library users
 A specific group of staff or users, or a potential user group. Name the target beneficiaries(s): _____
(e.g., children, adults, disadvantaged, remote access library users, unserved community members, reference staff, IT staff, students)

The activities needed to implement this project are envisioned to include (check all that apply):

- User training
 Staff training
 Grants
 Development of best practices
 Demonstration of emerging technology or practices
 Other, please explain:

Considering the outcome desired, how long should the project continue? _____
(Note that most projects are from one year to four years in length.)

Which Library Council areas of focus support the idea you are submitting (check all that apply)

1. Advance applied literacy in the state of Washington in areas such as legal research, health information, employment/job searching, and developing living voter's guides.
2. Enhance libraries relevancy in a democratic society.
3. Serve underserved, unserved, and culturally diverse communities and populations