

Professional Development Grants Program

Purpose

MPLA sponsors a professional development grants program to improve library services in the Mountain Plains region by supporting continuing education and research experiences for individuals employed in the library or related professions. The program is administered by the Professional Development Grants Committee.

Projects Funded

"The defined areas for which grant awards are given is intentionally a broad interpretation of possible actions for individual MPLA members to use when applying for Professional Development Grants. It is also intended to allow the Professional Development Grants Committee full latitude and responsibility for the evaluation and response to grant applications." (Motion passed by the MPLA Board of Directors September 15, 1985.)

Grants are awarded to support the following (not listed in priority order):

1. Formal course work leading to an advanced degree in library science or a related discipline.
2. Formal course work not leading to an advanced degree but directly related to an individual's library position.
3. Attendance as a participant or a presenter at a library or scholarly workshop, seminar, or conference, including the MPLA annual conference.
4. Visits to another library to receive or provide significant advanced training in library services or procedures.
5. Library related research projects.

Grant Categories

MPLA sponsors the two categories of grants listed below:

- Mini-grant -- Funding for projects requiring minimal financial support.
- Regular grant -- Funding for projects requiring substantial financial support, and for occasional funding of professional development opportunities requiring travel outside the United States.

Funding Priorities

The committee considers the following criteria in evaluating grant applications.

1. Priority is awarded to first-time applicants for a MPLA grant to encourage membership in the Association, stimulate the growth of individuals new to the library profession, and extend the benefits of MPLA membership to as many individuals as possible.
2. Priority is awarded to research projects and continuing education experiences that promise the greatest benefit to the applicant and library service in the MPLA region.
3. Priority is awarded to research projects and continuing education experiences that are directly related to the applicant's library assignment.
4. Applicants are generally not awarded more than one grant to pursue the same continuing education experience or research project. For example, applicants are not generally awarded more than one grant to support course work toward a degree or to attend a workshop, seminar, or conference attended in the past with grant support.

5. Research projects are funded only if the project has been well planned, will utilize sound research methodology, and promises to produce meaningful results that will benefit the library or associated professions.
6. When more worthy grant applications are received than can be funded, the committee gives priority to applicants with continuing records of MPLA membership.
7. No limit is placed on the number of applications which may be received from one library during the calendar year.

Budget, Grant Amounts, and Awards

1. The MPLA Board annually allocates a budget to support the grants program. The budget equals the funding for grants approved but not yet awarded from the previous year plus the funding the Board wishes to award for grants in the coming year. Funding for grants that have been approved but are not then awarded is returned to the MPLA general fund.
2. Grant funding is awarded to reimburse actual expenses incurred during a project. Transportation will be reimbursed for the lowest possible fare or for personal vehicles, mileage for the shortest route at the amount per mile allowed for deduction for federal income tax deductions. Grant funding for course work will be limited to tuition, fees and books. Funding approved but not needed to reimburse expenses is returned to the MPLA general fund. Expenses in excess of the grant funding approved are not reimbursed.
3. The maximum amount awarded in each of the grant categories is:
 - a. Mini-Grant -- \$150
 - b. Regular Grant -- \$600

Eligibility Requirements

1. Residence

To be eligible for a mini-grant or regular grant an applicant must be a resident of a state in the MPLA region. If an applicant moved from the MPLA region after being approved for a grant but before the grant is actually awarded then the applicant is not entitled to receive funding, even if the project was completed.

2. Association Membership
 - o Mini-Grant: Applicant must be a current member of MPLA and must have been a member for ~~one full year~~ **the previous year (total of 2 consecutive years)**.
 - o Regular Grant Applicant must be a current member of MPLA and must have been a member for the past two years (total of 3 consecutive years).
3. Employment

To be eligible for a professional development grant an applicant must be currently employed in a library, be a student accepted in an advanced degree program in library science or a related discipline, or hold a position or office associated with a library such as a trustee. Grant funding will generally not be awarded to a student unless that student was previously employed in a library

or related position in the MPLA region and intends to pursue his or her library career in the MPLA region.

4. MPLA Officers, Committee Chairs, and Members, and Grant Committee Members.

All MPLA members are eligible for professional development grants. Members of the Professional Development Grants Committee, however, may not vote on their own applications.

5. Past Recipients of Grants

A past recipient of a professional development grant may not apply for another grant until three years have elapsed following the end of the calendar year in which the previous grant was approved.

Application Procedure and Review Process

1. Applicant requests an application form from the Chair of the MPLA Professional Development Grants Committee or from the MPLA Executive Secretary. The application form is available from the MPLA website. If a member is not able to access the application form electronically, it can be requested from the Chair of the MPLA Professional Development Grants Committee or the MPLA Executive Secretary
2. Applicant submits the specified number of copies of the completed application and one copy of any supporting materials to the MPLA Executive Secretary. The committee prefers that the application be submitted as an email attachment to the MPLA Executive Secretary. Any supporting materials for which electronic submission is not possible may be mailed. Applications may be mailed if electronic submission is not possible.
3. Applicant will be notified by the MPLA Executive Secretary that the grant application was received.
4. The MPLA Executive Secretary reviews the application to insure the applicant is eligible for the grant requested. If the applicant is eligible for the grant, the MPLA Executive Secretary forwards copies of the application and supporting materials to members of the Committee by electronic means if possible. If the individual is not eligible for the grant, the MPLA Executive Secretary returns the application with an explanation of what must be done to meet eligibility requirements.
5. The application is evaluated by the committee and approved, rejected, or referred back to the applicant with a request for further information. The committee chair communicates the committee's decision in writing or email to the applicant, with a copy to the MPLA Executive Secretary. If the application is approved, the chair also provides the applicant with an evaluative report form. Information for obtaining the evaluative report form from the MPLA website.
6. The applicant submits the specified number of copies of the completed evaluative report to the MPLA Executive Secretary as an email attachment within two months of completing the grant project. Any supporting documentation may be mailed to the Executive Secretary. The MPLA Executive Secretary forwards copies of the evaluative report to the committee. If the grant was for formal course work taken for academic credit,

- evidence must be included to support that the course work was successfully completed.
7. The committee reviews the evaluative report and accepts it, rejects it, or refers it back to the applicant with a request for further information. The committee chair communicates the committee's decision in writing or email to the applicant, with a copy to the MPLA Executive Secretary.
 8. If the evaluative report is approved, the MPLA Executive Secretary issues a check to reimburse actual expenses associated with the grant project. If the evaluative report is rejected, no funding will be awarded to the applicant.
 9. The chair forwards a copy of the approved evaluative report to the MPLA Newsletter Editor for possible publication.

Committee Membership, Responsibilities, and Meetings

The committee consists of three or more members appointed by the MPLA President. No two members are appointed from the same state. Members are appointed for two year staggered terms commencing with the calendar year. The chair is appointed by the MPLA President from among the members who have one year of committee experience. The MPLA Executive Secretary serves ex-officio as a non-voting member of the committee.

Responsibilities associated with the program are assigned as follows:

1. Committee responsibilities:
 - a. to evaluate grant applications for approval or rejection.
 - b. to review evaluative reports for approval or rejection.
2. Committee members' responsibilities:
 - . to attend committee meetings and to participate in conference calls, to review applications and evaluative reports,
 - a. to promote the grants program in their state(s).
3. Chair responsibilities:
 - . to notify applicants of committee actions within 20 days following such actions,
 - a. to distribute grant applications and evaluative report forms if a member is unable to access them electronically from the MPLA website,
 - b. to schedule and conduct committee meetings and conference calls,
 - c. to communicate committee decisions to applicants,
 - d. to serve ex-officio as a non-voting member of the MPLA Board, [referred to the committee for input, Bd. Mtg. 1/97]
 - e. to provide the Board with program reports,
 - f. to submit an annual budget to the Board,
 - g. to place announcements concerning the grants program and deadlines for submitting applications in the MPLA Newsletter and other state and regional newsletters as well as the MPLA website.
4. End-of-calendar year responsibilities:
 - . to update records of the committee and other relevant materials and forward to new committee chair,
 - a. to submit other materials to the MPLA Archives.
5. New committee chair responsibility:
 - . to hold materials for one year past the year the action was taken.
6. MPLA Executive Secretary responsibilities:
 - . to participate ex-officio as a non-voting member of the committee,

- a. to receive and distribute applications and evaluative reports,
- b. to determine grant eligibility,
- c. to issue checks to reimburse grant project related expenses,
- d. to advise the committee on policies and procedures.

The committee meets during the annual MPLA conference to review applications and annual reports, and to conduct any other necessary business. The committee may sponsor a session at the annual conference to stimulate interest in the grants program and to offer a forum for grant recipients to present the results of their projects. The committee holds conference calls throughout the year on a bimonthly schedule set by the chair.

(May 1983; May 1983; May 1985; Aug. 1985; April 1991; May 1991; Jan. 1996)

[Professional Development Grant Application](#) 

[Professional Development Grant Evaluative Report](#) 