

Publicizing your Library Services and Technology Act grant



Congratulations! Your organization has successfully received a **Federally-funded LSTA grant** to pursue your project.

Make the most of the grant!

Publicizing your grant helps to raise your organization's profile in your community, which in turn helps citizens think positively of your organization when you seek their vote on a bond, or levy, or when you ask for a contribution. Receiving the grant shows that your organization is successful, and people like to be part of a successful group. You'll also show that you have successfully brought money into your community.

Writing a news release

Accuracy and brevity are your goals when writing a news release. Write your news release in journalistic "inverted pyramid" style—stating the most important facts first. When writing a news release, all facts must be given attribution—that is facts stated in the news release must be stated by someone with the authority to make the statement such as the library director, governance volunteers or others as appropriate. You can use quotes as a way to provide attribution, or simply start a sentence with "Library Director Mary Gomez said ...". Avoid fluffy quotes. Especially avoid superlatives! Just report the facts.

Where and to whom do you send the news release?

Create a mailing list that includes media outlets (print, radio, TV, magazines). Contact information is likely to be located in the telephone book. Call each entity and ask for the name of the reporter who would be responsible for covering the library, or ask for the editor (for print), or news director for electronic media. This is also an opportunity to determine how each outlet would like to receive its news, whether by email, fax, or mail. Ask to speak with the individual. If you reach them it is important to ask them if this is a good time to talk; remember they are often on deadline. Then pitch your story in a sentence or two and ask if this is something they might be interested in covering. If there is interest, you might offer to set up an interview with the director or a behind-the-scenes tour of your facility.

Reporters often ask you to send them something in writing. Direct your news release to the correct person by name. Make sure that you spell their name correctly (not doing so really irks them). Identify local entities with newsletters (e.g. Chamber of Commerce, etc.) and local, regional, state and federal officials. Post your news release on the Library website, and in Friends or Foundation newsletters, and on a bulletin board in your library. Brainstorm other relevant locations to send the information. For example, if the grant is for a children's program, consider notifying schools, daycare centers, etc.

When to send a news release about your grant

A news release is just that, news. The fact that your organization received a grant is news. Starting a program funded by the grant is news. It is appropriate to send a news release when you have news to share. Keep your community apprised of your progress.

There are a variety of factors that determine whether your story will receive coverage. If you issue a news release on the same day as a tragic fire, your story could get lost in the shuffle. If there is a larger news event, hold your release for a quieter news day. The time of day and day of week are other factors to consider when you issue a release or call a reporter. The best time to reach a television news desk is in the morning, not in the late afternoon when they are preparing for their newscasts. One way to garner additional attention is to tie the announcement of your award to a community event or to a current news issue. If you can link your announcement with other activities or events, you increase the chance of capturing media attention.



It's all about results

Funding entities (in this case, OSL, IMLS, Congress and members of your community) want to know that their funding helped produce results. Your grant application will have identified how results of the project will be defined and measured.

When covering your grant, the media will want to define the project in terms of the effect on one person, or one family. How will this grant-funded project make a difference to their readership? While the media like to focus on the effect of the program on one person, or family, they also want to know the overall statistics. Is the project helping a lot of people, or just a few? Prepare a fact sheet that outlines the highlights of your grant. Just as your news releases will cover the Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How, so should your fact sheet.

Acknowledging Funders

*It is important that your news releases accurately acknowledge the entities that fund your grant. And is it important that during news interviews you clearly communicate the source of funding to news reporters.

*News releases and articles you release should include the following acknowledgment language, usually placed as the final paragraph: *This (project, program, publication) is supported in whole (or in part) by the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by the Oregon State Library.*

*Send Oregon State Library two copies of all news releases, publications, newspaper clips, etc.

Acronyms and their relevance

LSTA = Library Services and Technology Act—LSTA is the name of the federal grant program that funded your project. Your grant is funded with **federal** funds (NOT state funds).

IMLS = Institute for Museum and Library Services—IMLS is the **federal** agency that appropriates federal money to the Library Services and Technology Act grant program.

OSL = Oregon State Library—OSL is a **state** agency, and the entity that administers the LSTA grant process in Oregon.