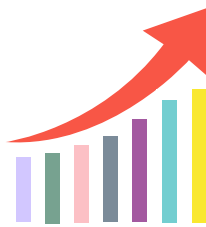


ALA Building Library Capacity Grantees 2024



Building Library Capacity Grant

ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

The ALA Building Library Capacity Grants are intended to bolster library operations and services in libraries that had experienced cuts in staffing and or services as a result of the challenges of the pandemic. The ALA Building Library Capacity Grants are supported through a three-year grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

The grants can be used to broaden technology access, develop collections, provide digital instruction, increase staffing, and expand outreach, or maintaining or amplifying other existing service strategies or adding new ones. Each year will focus on helping add capacity to different libraries, especially those serving marginalized or underrepresented segments of the community. Libraries serving incarcerated persons or libraries assisting those re-entering society were designated for the grants in 2024.

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, nearly 2 million individuals were incarcerated in 2023 in the United States- in prisons, jails, juvenile correctional centers, and other detention institutions. Research shows that increasing the literacy rates and strengthening the library and information access opportunities for detained and formerly detained individuals often correlates to reduced recidivism and successful reentry.

The American Library Association is committed to library access for everyone, especially for those whose access is too often unfairly restricted. These grants directly contribute to our mission," said ALA President Emily Drabinski, "ALA truly appreciates the generous support and long-standing commitment of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to assist under resourced libraries serving underserved or marginalized communities post-pandemic."

Grantees

Sacramento Public Library (CA)

The Library serves communities experiencing incarceration at the Sacramento County Jail or re-entry by providing Reference by Mail; Adult Literacy Tutoring; Book Discussions; and a twice-yearly Re-entry Resource Fair. Finding a job after re-entry is difficult and one of the main reasons for re-incarceration. Working in partnership with the Sacramento County Jail and Capital Storytelling, the grant will teach adults re-entering society to utilize the power of storytelling as a tool in job interviews, focusing on positive aspects of their lived experience as they transition into the workforce.

Friends of the San Quentin Library (CA)

Adult literacy and basic education are a pressing need at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center. Forty-four percent of the population/residents test below an 8th grade reading level. Low level literacy diminishes prospects for successful re-entry to society. The Friends will use the grant to improve services for patrons with low literacy or limited English proficiency. New literacy support materials in English and Spanish will be purchased to support academic and vocational programs, in particular Adult Basic Education and High School/GED. The Friends will also expand the libraries audiobook collection and access with parole board-recommended preparation materials and subjects.

Chillicothe & Ross County Public Library (OH)

The Chillicothe & Ross County Public Library (CRCPL) will expand collections access at Ross Correctional Institution (RCI) whose library mostly depends on public donations. In a collaborative effort with the Ross Correctional Institution, the library will purchase fiction genres of interest and nonfiction titles geared toward post-release employment for the nearly 2,000 adults currently incarcerated there.

University of West Georgia (GA)

The University of West Georgia (UWG) offers classes and a bachelor's degree program at Hays State Prison, United States Penitentiary Atlanta, and for classes at Coweta Prison and Work Release Center. With the grant UWG will increase the quantity and quality of academic books, journals, research guides, and resources housed at the three carceral facilities. The new resources available at the facilities will benefit not only incarcerated students but also all residents at the facilities.

Meridian Library District (ID)

There is only one librarian for the entire Idaho state-wide prison system. With a number of Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC) facilities nearby, 55% of all those re-entering society across the

state enter Meridian, Ada County and surrounding area. The library is dedicated to recognizing IDOC residents as their patrons. Meridian staff visit facilities for reentry classes, sharing library resources on workforce development and skill building. Meridian Library staff will work with the IDOC librarian to purchase materials for IDOC libraries for various reading levels and interests, including in Spanish and other languages for the increasing number of residents where English is not their first language. There has also been an increase in the aging population at facilities. Large print books and assistive devices will be added to the collections.

Bristol County Sheriff's Office (MA)

Three facilities house over 750 individuals served by a central library. Like other carceral institutions resources at the library have come through donations with most are out of date and do not meeting the needs and interest of residents. There is a lack multi-cultural literature for the changed make-up of the population. In addition to books that provide stories of different perspectives and experiences, health and wellness titles, the library will add desired resources on family and parenting, health and wellness and financial literacy development titles.

Griswold Memorial Library (MA)

The Griswold Memorial Library, in partnership with the Belding Memorial Library, in rural Massachusetts has provided outreach services to the Franklin County Jail since 2021. Library staff provide outreach services to the jail twice per month, and to facilitate a "Read to the Children" program for caregivers to share recordings of themselves reading to their children. With the grant the library will create a small resource library at a new county re-entry center with library staff providing programs and workshops there. Literacy experts from the Eric Carle Museum will also be enlisted to lead workshops for caregivers/participants to prepare for success.

Charles County Public Library (MD)

The Library engages incarcerated persons through its collection and services at the Charles County Detention Center Library which was established to offer access to services and resources that enrich and improve the lives of incarcerated persons. To foster successful reentry back into society. Library staff provide various programming, including skill building workshops and book discussions. The Library will add titles for often requested areas such as construction, starting a small business, but also expand the Storybook Program where incarcerated parents read aloud and have recorded a children's book for their children to have at home.

Itawamba County Sheriff's Department (MS)

Located in northeast Mississippi, the jail's current collection of materials is small, consisting mostly of books that are badly damaged, outdated, or both. The materials are not representative of the jail population and lack diversity. There is a critical need for vocational resources, which are crucial to personal improvement and decreased recidivism rates. With the grant the volunteer librarian will add educational resources, improve the general reading collection, and update technology that will help facilitate GED and other courses with community college partners.

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MS)

The college has recently applied to designate the George County Regional Correctional Facility

(GCRCF) as an accredited off-campus instructional site with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges. With the grant the college library will increase resources and support for students at the GCRCF working on various degrees. In addition to increasing technology and educational resources and instructional support college's library staff will partner with the Lucedale-George County Public Library and others to provide re-entry programming- mock job interviews, resume writing, finding affordable housing, and where to find legal assistance.

Queens Public Library Foundation (NY)

The Queens Public Library NeOn program is for young adults aged 16-24 who are involved with the Department of Probation. Many participants are not aware of post-secondary and career options and need help completing college or vocational school applications, understanding financial aid options, and exploring different educational or career pathways. The grant will be used to take advantage of the library's existing podcasting expertise to create a new component for the NEOn. "JUSTTalk: Social Justice Narratives for Young Adults," will create cohorts interested in journalism or media providing them with transferrable writing, interviewing and digital editing skills.

South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice (SC)

With fourteen sites, but only one library at its long-term facility there is a great need to support residents who are thirteen to nineteen years old. The Upstate Evaluation Center is the hub for four sites, which specializes in alternative programs and services for juveniles on transfer, probation, or parole. The grant will create a brand-new library at the Upstate Evaluation Center, including furnishings. The books purchased will start the core collection for the Upstate Evaluation Center with input from student's answers to a reading survey conducted at the start of the school year.

Roanoke Detention Center (VA)

The library in city detention center, serves 300-350 men and women. Until now, the sole librarian has had to rely on donated books. There are very few references or educational resources, with most being woefully out of date. The collection lacks books of interest that would encourage reading, with very few in Spanish or in large print for those with low vision issues. The grant will be used to update all parts of the collection with new resources and titles. To assist those with low literacy levels reading pens that scan the printed text on the page and read it aloud via earphones.

Tacoma Public Library (WA)

The Tacoma Public library has an established a partnership with Washington State Department of Corrections, wherein individuals returning to society within the library's service area are provided a standard-access card upon their release from incarceration. However, the lack of internet access is a significant challenge for formerly incarcerated individuals, exacerbating their struggles with stable housing, employment opportunities, educational resources, and support networks. The Library Tacoma will acquire Wi-Fi hotspots and create tailored re-entry kits tailored as part of a comprehensive program to bridge the digital equity gap in support of formerly incarcerated individuals as they re-enter society.

Fox Lake Correctional Institution (WI)

With 1,300 residents, the solo librarian and library clerks serve an average of one 1,000 patrons per

week at the library. Many individuals take academic and vocational classes, including being part of the Trinity Bachelor program. Unfortunately, the textbooks and non-fiction books are in the 25-30 years old range, and the library repairs 3,000 books each year due to use and age. The grant will update and add to the collection, primarily in the area's education, vocation, entrepreneurship, legal, re-entry, and non-fiction.

La Crosse Public Library (WI)

After assists incarcerated persons at the La Crosse County Jail improve their writing skills before re-entry, in collaboration with Western Technical College (WTC), the Library now promotes services to inmates in WTC classes, and networks with incarceration-impacted students at WTC's annual Resource Fair. Grant funds will establish a new collection of educational materials that mirrors WTC's and other resources to assist patrons to complete their GED, including test vouchers. The Library will also assist families of those re-entering the area with school supplies and celebrate graduates the jail writing courses and their poetry during National Poetry Month.

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