

NTLP PROJECT OVERVIEW: Hands-On eReader Labs

NTLP has been awarded an Impact Grant from the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. This grant will be used to provide an eReader Lab and related staff training to each of nine libraries in the combined area formerly served by Big Country Library System, Northeast Texas Library System and North Texas Regional Library System.

Each eReader Lab will consist of 3 devices, most likely a Kindle Fire, a Color Nook and a Sony Reader (or similar substitutions if any of the 3 brand models aren't available at the time of purchase), and will be used by participating libraries to provide hands-on training for the public, the Board, the Council / Commission, staff / volunteers and / or other community groups. NTLP will provide related training for representatives of the nine libraries at one site in each of the three former system areas.

Libraries wishing to participate are asked to read this overview and submit the related online application by **11:45 p.m. Saturday September 22**. Three libraries from each of the three former system areas will be selected and so notified by 5 p.m. Friday September 28.

History

Because NTLP serves libraries in any geographic area, and to get a more-clear idea of what issues public libraries would like to have such an organization help them address, NTLP staff convened several focus group meetings across the former NTRLS, NETLS and BCLS service areas in late 2011. Among the most frequently identified trends was that of circulating eBooks. Library personnel indicated a need for help in learning more about eBook circulating options, eReader devices available and eBook resources and in determining whether the community would take advantage of having eBooks available at the library.

As part of the Information Literacy component of NTLP's Libraries for Literacy project in SFY2011, eReader-related programs were offered for the public, through several North Central Texas libraries. Each program began with a presentation during which an experienced and knowledgeable person discussed the pros and cons of various eReaders and tablets. That presentation was followed by a petting zoo, or hands-on opportunity for program participants to try each device and determine which felt best in their hands, offered best readability options for their own needs, etc. The speaker remained available and ready to provide one-on-one responses as participants asked questions.

While those presentations were well-accepted by patrons as well as library personnel, it eventually became clear that each library needed someone on staff who could make such a presentation and answer participant questions and that, ideally, the library should have a collection of the more-common eReader devices on hand for those presentations. The idea for this project came out of that finding plus the results of the 2011 focus group meetings.

Selection of Participating Libraries

Staff at interested libraries must complete and submit, by midnight Saturday September 22, 2012, an online application, available at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/eReaderLabsProject>. Libraries will be selected randomly from among the applicants that meet the goals of the program.

Responsibilities of Participating Libraries

Participating libraries will be required to do the following:

- Send at least one staff member to at least one of the 3 training sessions,
- Process lab items into the library's inventory,
- Plan, promote and provide several petting zoo / presentations, a portion of which must be provided for specific groups such as local government officials, school boards, civic organizations and the library board. Staff at each participating library will work with NTLP staff to determine – for that library community – the total number of presentations, proportion intended for specific groups and identification of those groups,
- Respond to an evaluative survey at the beginning and at the end of the project,
- Survey library patrons at the beginning and end of each petting zoo / presentation relative to access to and satisfaction with access to eBooks which meet educational, economic and / or other personal goals,
- Tally the survey results and forward the surveys and tallies to NTLP in time for the next sequential NTLP report to TSLAC,
- Share best practices and lessons learned through periodic posts to social media as well as the NTLP blog and, when they exist, those of participating libraries, and
- See that at least one staff member participates in the follow-up training session as well as the project wrap-up meeting, both of which will probably occur online.

Responsibilities of NTLP

NTLP will do the following:

- Develop evaluation tools to measure before and after status of library issues related to the project,
- Order and distribute equipment for the 9 eReader labs,
- Determine and announce participating libraries by the end of September,
- Survey staff at participating libraries both at the beginning of the project and in late July / early August relative to access to and satisfaction with access to information which meets educational, economic and / or other personal goals,
- Provide, in each of the 3 former system service areas, a workshop which provides training relative to presenting and evaluating hands-on petting zoo / presentations, some basic concepts for promotional materials and information relative to how to interpret project results and make corresponding decisions,
- Provide follow-up training sessions for review and quality control,
- Prepare and submit to TSLAC all reports required by that grantor, and
- Host a meeting of representatives of the participating libraries for the purpose of sharing patron input, and library feedback and reaching closure on the project.

Timeline

September 2012	NTLP staff develops evaluation tools to measure before & after status of library issues related to the project. NTLP staff develops online application / related materials & promotes the program to public libraries in the former NTRLS, NETLS & BCLS service areas. NTLP staff orders equipment for the 9 eReader labs. Online applications are completed & submitted. Participating libraries are identified and notified.
Early October 2012	NTLP coordinates, announces & provides training sessions - which include evaluation tools for use before & after each petting zoo / presentation plus some basic concepts for promotional materials - in each of the 3 areas. Libraries receive the equipment & process the items into the library's inventory.
Late October 2012	Staff at the libraries begin planning target audiences & tentative dates for their petting zoo / presentations & developing promotional materials, with the option of using NTLT-provided templates for those materials.
November 2012	Each library finalizes dates, distributes promotional materials, posts online announcements & begins offering petting zoo / presentations.
Early December 2012	NTLP staff provides follow-up training sessions (possibly online only) for review, updates & quality control. NTLP staff prepare the first-quarter grant report & submit it to TSLAC.
December 2012 through July 2013	The libraries continue to provide petting zoo / presentations for their communities. NTLP staff & staff at participating libraries share developments & reactions via blogs & social media.
March 2013	NTLP staff prepare the mid-year grant report & submit it to TSLAC.
June 2013	NTLP staff prepare the third-quarter grant report & submit it to TSLAC.
Early August 2013	Involved staff from the 9 libraries meet with NTLT staff to share patron input, provide library feedback & reach closure on the project. NTLP staff prepare the final grant report & submit it to TSLAC.

Additional Details

All participating libraries may use other funding sources to add devices to their own labs if they choose.

Although training will be offered in each of the three former system areas, representatives of participating libraries may participate in the training offered at any of the three sites and / or the participating libraries may send different representatives to different sites to maximize the library's number of trained staff.

NTLP will neither be involved in scheduling the library's petting zoo / presentation programs to the community nor dictate the format or content of those programs.

Participating libraries may choose any source or multiple sources of eBooks, at their own discretion.