

Libraries Without Borders US

Library-School Partnership Request for Proposal (RFP)

Enhancing library access for youth and families through their local schools

RFP Overview:

Libraries Without Borders US (LWB US) seeks to partner with public libraries across the United States to enhance access and usage for underserved youth and families through the creation of library access points within local schools, working with school librarians, and developing partnerships that build bridges between school and public libraries.

Through this Request for Proposal (RFP), LWB US will select five (5) public libraries or library systems with high levels of community need, engaged school partners, demonstrated staff capacity, and a commitment to sustain successful efforts launched through this project.

Selected partners will receive technical assistance spanning data collection and analysis, strategy and partnership development, implementation support, ongoing evaluation, and sustainability planning/library staff training as well as supplies and materials up to \$5,000 to support the direct costs of establishing and enhancing outreach and access within their local school systems.

This work is funded through a generous grant from DEMAIN*, supporting nonprofits around the world to provide equal opportunities and access to health, education, and culture.

About Libraries Without Borders US:

LWB US is the American branch of the international nonprofit, *Bibliothèque Sans Frontières*. We expand access to essential information, educational opportunities, and critical resources to build stronger, more inclusive communities.

LWB US collaborates with public libraries and community organizations to expand their reach and use, catalyze community connections, and bridge critical resource gaps. Using data-driven outreach models and community engagement strategies, our partnerships help libraries sustainably reach new populations and create ongoing connections to information, education, and local resources.

We specialize in research and data analysis, community stakeholder engagement and asset mapping, staff and volunteer training, immersive community outreach, evaluation for continuous improvement, and sustainability planning. Leveraging data-driven insights from our quantitative and qualitative research, LWB US partners with library staff and leaders to make informed decisions, identify and implement solutions, capture learnings, and measure results.

LWB US has a long and successful record of providing tools, programs, technology, and expertise to expand the reach of libraries. With the support of DEMAIN*, we will leverage this experience to develop public library access points at local public schools, bridging the gap for families and students who are otherwise unaware or unable to access the available resources.

*DEMAIN is a donor advised fund administered by CAF America, a US Public Charity with EIN 43-1634280.

Project Rational:

- Public libraries across the United States have long been places of refuge for underserved families and youth seeking books and resources for learning and entertainment.
- Libraries today are trusted spaces that provide critical information, educational opportunities, and community resources for families.
- Public libraries provide vital resources that enable growth, learning, and skill-building along with access to essential information and community services.
- Yet families and youth facing barriers such as time, distance, or lack of awareness may not be able to access the valuable resources and services available at their local libraries.
- By bringing the public library to school, we break down these barriers and build familiarity, increasing access for families and youth while increasing the likelihood of continued engagement with their local library.

Through this RFP, LWB US will partner with five public libraries to directly expand library access and usage for underserved families and youth. Bringing public libraries to schools is an opportunity to promote library offerings to youth and their families and to provide streamlined services and resources in a trusted community space.

Strategies and solutions supported through this RFP may include:

- Awareness-building campaigns and activities
- Targeted outreach through existing school communication channels, offerings and events
- Promoting and offering library services and programming on-site in schools
- Facilitating resource and collection sharing (for teachers/school staff as well as students and families) between library and school systems.

LWB US is also interested in other ideas or opportunities proposed that will increase library access for underserved youth and families.

In addition to increasing access to books, internet, and technology through public school partnerships, we encourage libraries to use these partnerships to increase the use of programs and community resources such as language and literacy classes, legal services or tax support, or additional educational and job training support.

Applicant Eligibility:

Applicants must be a Public Library or Public Library System (accessible by the general public and funded from public sources) operating within the United States.

Competitive applicants will:

- Serve a community with a high representation of underserved population/s.
- Demonstrate a commitment to community engagement through existing outreach efforts.
- Have an established partnership with local schools and/or a commitment from local school systems to partner through this project at the elementary and/or middle school level.
- Have dedicated staff capacity to actively engage in this project and continue implementation after the grant period.
- Indicate a commitment to sustaining and expanding successful efforts launched through this grant.

Selected partners will commit to collecting and reporting on key metrics throughout the duration of their pilot projects, including but not limited to levels of outreach and community engagement, number of library card sign-ups amongst target populations, and collection use statistics.

Technical Assistance and Support Provided

LWB US will provide hands-on assistance throughout the project, including:

- Data collection and analysis of existing library utilization patterns and barriers to access
- Strategy and partnership development to optimize relationships between libraries, schools, and relevant community organizations
- Implementation support to create new pipelines of library awareness, access, and usage
- Ongoing evaluation of library access and usage
- Sustainability planning and library staff training for ongoing implementation

Funding Limitations:

Selected partners will receive supplies and materials up to \$5,000 to support the direct costs of establishing and enhancing outreach and access within their local school system. Funds will support costs such as equipment, supplies, materials, or other direct programs costs to building and implementing access points. Funds will not support staffing or other indirect program costs.

Application Process & Timeline:

Applications will be accepted through October 31, 2024 via this [Library-School Application Form](#). Late applications will not be considered for this opportunity.

LWB US will review applicants and conduct finalist interviews in early November, with awards anticipated later that month.

The project period will span January – August 2025 following this approximate timeline:

- January - February: Access point planning and local partnership development
- March - May: Pilots for school-year based access points launched and data collected
- June - August: Pilots for summer-based access points launched and data collected
- June - August: Sustainability planning and library staff training

Contact Information:

Questions regarding this RFP will be accepted through Friday, October 25, 2024, and can be directed to LWB US Executive Director Nina Safane at nina@librarieswithoutborders.us.

This RFP and link to the application are also available on the LWB US website at www.librarieswithoutborders.us/welcome/library-school-partnership-rfp/.