



WVLS Innovation and Collaboration Grant Application

1. WVLS Member Library Applicant Information

Name Loralee Petersen

Library Name & Phone

Number Owen Public Library 715-229-2939

Library Type Public

Population Served by Your
Library 936 - municipal & 2,868 extended county - Total 3,804

Is this the first time your library is applying for this grant?

Yes ☒ No ☐

2. Collaboration Partner Information

Name Tim Swiggum

Organization Name/Number City of Owen 715-229-2404

Organization Purpose

Local government

Population Served by Your

Organization 936

Is this the first time your organization is applying for this grant?

Yes ☒ No ☐

3. Explanation of the Use of Grant Funds

(Between 3-5 pages)

- Describe your innovative program or service. Explain what makes it innovative.
- Describe how this program or service is collaborative.
- Outline the goal of the program or service. How does this project align with your library's mission? How will your library community benefit from this project? Provide specific examples.
- Provide a timeline for this project. What will happen and when?



WVLS Innovation and Collaboration Grant Application

- Provide anticipated expenses, including funds from the grant and each participating agency.
- Address how this project will be sustained in the future.
- Explain how your program will be evaluated.

4. Agreement

By applying:

- I acknowledge that any unused grant funds will be reimbursed to WVLS within 30 days of the completion of the project.
- I acknowledge that I will submit a written or oral report to WVLS within 60 days of the completion of the project.
- Should the project or service not be completed, I understand that the library may be required to reimburse WVLS for the full grant amount.

Collaboration Organization

Director/Manager Signature Timothy F. Sniggen, Community Development
Date 5-24-18

Library Director/Manager Signature

Date 5-24-18

To be completed by the Library Board President

If granted the WVLS Innovation and Collaboration Grant, Loralee Petersen (name of applicant) has the library board's permission to implement the new program as stated above. The Library Board understands:

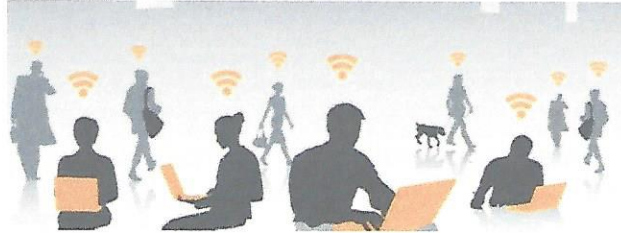
- That any unused grant funds will be reimbursed to WVLS within 30 days of the completion of the project.
- That the Director or Manager shall be required to submit a written or oral report to WVLS within 60 days of the completion of the project.
- That should the project or service not be completed or the reporting requirements are not fulfilled, the library may be required to reimburse WVLS for the full grant amount.

Library Board President's Name

Library Board President's Signature

Date 5/24/18

Owen Public Library
414 N. Central Ave.
PO Box 130
Owen, WI 54460



WVLS Innovation and Collaboration Grant 2018

Describe your innovative program or service. Why is it innovative? How does your proposed program/service reflect the call to action of “Rising to the Challenge: Re-Envisioning Public Libraries by the Aspen Institute?”

<http://csreports.aspeninstitute.org/Dialogue-on-Public-Libraries/2014/report/details/0091/Libraries>

Currently at our library, a number of people sit in their cars to use the WiFi. Sometimes the library is closed. Sometimes they just prefer to stay in their cars. There is no vestibule or lobby that we can keep open after hours. We are a rural community and many people do not have access to quality WiFi and others cannot afford it. WiFi is a necessary element for education, job searches and even family connectivity. Our library is open from 1:00 until 8:00 on weekdays but these hours aren't convenient for everyone.

Furthermore, the library staff and board are concerned about the safety of people using the WiFi after hours. They frequently park in the parking lot to the side of the building. Our building is at the end of the street and people in the parking lot are pretty much hidden from the rest of the street. The parking lot lights used to go out at midnight. We've extended the time that the lights stay on until 6:00 am. Still, the parking lot at night is a lonely place. Police would have to physically enter the parking lot to see if something was happening there. Clearly, the Owen library's WiFi users are not getting the best deal.

However, we envision something better.

Across the street from the library is a small park with grass, trees and, in warmer months, a single picnic table. This space is called Fremont Park, after the hotel that formerly stood there. In 2015 the park was the site of a celebration for the library's 100th anniversary and to honor retiring library director Shirley Lehr. There were speakers and a tree planting and cake and music. Everyone had a wonderful time and many remarked on what a shame it was that this little park wasn't used more often.

When police chief Andrew Schade requested that the library turn off their WiFi at night, due to safety concerns in the parking lot, library board members and staff began to think of ways to keep the WiFi on and keep people safe. One way involved putting Fremont Park to better use.

It was discovered that the library's WiFi signal was accessible at the park. We would be willing to boost the signal if that would send more people there rather than into our parking lot.

We'd start by erecting a gazebo type shelter in the park with built-in benches where people can sit. Good lighting would be a priority for safety reasons. If necessary we would boost the wifi signal so it would be strong enough.

As I started thinking about this project, I went to Tim Swiggum at the city office and found out that he was working on a grant to cover the costs of upgrading the landscaping in public places. One of those places would be our little Fremont Park. This grant, called "The America in Bloom" grant was awarded to the city and they formed a group called Growin' Owen to implement the project. The America in Bloom grant includes community participation in its requirements. The library then chose to use the theme "Bloomin' at the Owen Public Library" for our summer program to support their efforts. We will be holding a gardening workshop in June and a container garden contest will follow at the Owen Jr. Fair in July.

The Growin' Owen volunteers have already added some plantings to our park. Further plans include a low hedge or row of shrubs that run along the railroad tracks that border one side of the park. Currently, train watchers do gather there. The hedge would be an added safety measure to keep people from getting too close.

Then, the library was approached by a family who wanted to donate a bench to the library in memory of a family member who had been an active library board member a number of years ago. We are not sure whether we might add this to the library lawn or to the park but it would provide additional seating for WiFi users (and book readers.)

As a librarian, I find myself sandwiched between two very different generations of librarians. The older generation seems to have the philosophy that a library is books. Although this generation has also been involved with developing music, audiobook and DVD collections, their emphasis for the library was always on books. To me, the library is about media. The format is not as important as the content. The young "fresh out of school" librarians I've talked to feel that the library is about providing the community with what it needs whether that be books or programming or something completely different. I think this is an accurate example of how librarians and libraries themselves are changing over time. A WiFi park is a new and exciting idea. It is about giving the community what it needs - internet access 24/7. But a park is also an excellent place to bring a book and while away a beautiful spring day. Or to download a book, for that matter. The gazebo might prove to be a great place for programs such as summer storytime or evening concerts. The City Council of Owen is currently

considering adding a charging station for electric cars by the park. The park will be a benefit to car owners who are waiting for charging to be complete.

While we see a great need for WiFi access, we hope that improvements made to Fremont Park will make it more usable for many people and for many purposes.

Provide an outline of the program or service. What will happen and when?

- I. I will meet with Eric, the head of city maintenance and Tim, City employee and head of the America in Bloom grant. We will decide what materials need to be purchased and map out where everything will be placed.
- II. Concrete slabs will be poured where the gazebo and the memorial bench will be placed.
- III. The city maintenance crew will build the gazebo and supervise placement of the bench.
- IV. WiFi signal strength will be tested and we will determine if there is a need for the signal to be boosted.
- V. We will publicize the new park and a grand opening with food and music will be held.

Outline the goal of the program, how the new program/service aligns with each collaboration participant's mission, and how your library community will benefit from the new program. Please provide specific examples.

- I. Our goal is to take a space that is marginally usable now and make it a comfortable, inviting and safe place for people to relax, use library WiFi, enjoy nature, attend events and even do a bit of train watching.
- II. The Growin' Owen committee is collaborating with us because our project dovetails nicely with theirs. They are trying to improve the natural beauty and usability of public spaces.
- III. The City is collaborating because they want residents to have safe, usable public spaces and access to free WiFi. They also want to attract visitors and make a good impression on the world at large.
- IV. The city maintenance crew is responsible for the upkeep of public spaces so it is in their best interest to help us make sure all new projects are done correctly and in such a way that the crew can easily manage their maintenance.
- V. The library is collaborating on this project because we are committed to providing a much needed service to the community - free WiFi - and we want to present this service in a safe and effective way.

Address where future funding to sustain the new program/service will come from.

Responsibility for the upkeep of the park will be as follows:

- The city maintenance department will be responsible for the physical upkeep of the park such as lawn mowing, repairs to the shelter, etc. This should be covered in their current budget.
- The city council agreed that the city shall be responsible for paying for any electric costs from the park such as increased lighting needs. This should be covered for the year in the current budget. An increase of \$2,500 in cost is estimated. Adjustments can be made in the future if needed.
- The library will be responsible for maintaining a strong wifi signal to the park. This is already in the scope of our budget.

Provide a project/service outline, expected budget including funds from the grant and each participating agency, and an estimated deadline for completion.

Item	Cost
Concrete	\$1,000
Gazebo	\$2,000
Labor	\$5,000
Publicity/Opening Party	\$500
Total	\$8,500

Outline how your program will be evaluated.

We will evaluate the program in two ways.

1. By tracking the number of WiFi uses on Dashboard for a year after the park opens.
2. For select weeks during the first year after the park opens, we will visually check on the number of park users at certain times throughout the day and record the number.
3. Any programs scheduled in the park, especially using the new gazebo, will also be taken into consideration.
4. Success of the program will be determined by the amount of use the park gets after it is renovated.