



2024 Improving Access to Information Grants

TWELVE PUBLIC & ACADEMIC LIBRARIES AWARDED GRANTS!

The Library of Michigan (LM) is pleased to announce twelve Improving Access to Information grants for the 2024/2025 fiscal year. LM received 23 applications from academic and public libraries working to provide further access and services to their students and communities. The awards total \$234,265.

The Improving Access to Information grant program is intended to help Michigan's public and academic libraries provide improved access to collections in one of three areas; literacy, local history or special collections, and services to community users with limited online access, e.g. improving equity through digital inclusion. Of the twelve grant recipients, one is an academic library and eleven are public libraries. Two libraries received local history or special collections grants, two libraries received digital inclusion grants, and eight libraries received literacy related grants. The project descriptions are listed below.

Capital Area District Libraries – “Digitization of the Stebbins Real Estate Collection” - \$25,000.00

The Forest Parke Library and Archives, a Capital Area District Libraries department, will undertake digitizing and cataloging the Standard Card Files series of the Stebbins Real Estate Collection. This unique resource, encompassing over 300 boxes of Lansing and Ingham County property records (1920s-1970s), offers a window into local history. By making it accessible online, researchers can uncover past practices that perpetuate systemic inequalities, informing efforts towards a more inclusive future.

Flat River Community Library – “Baby's First Book Bag: Early Literacy Kits for Families of Newborns” - \$21,714.00

Flat River Community Library will partner with Corewell Health Greenville Hospital to provide early literacy kits to newborns and their caregivers. Each early literacy kit, referred to as “Baby's First Book Bag,” will contain items to educate caregivers about the importance of incorporating early literacy practices into their baby's day and materials with which to enable and encourage those practices. Our goal is to empower parents to engage in early literacy practices and to continue those practices via library services.

Frankenmuth James E. Wickson District Library – “Enhancing Access and Engagement for Seniors through Library Outreach and Memory Care Programs” - \$13,719.00

Our project aims to expand access to library collections and services for elderly individuals, including those with dementia or Alzheimer's, both in-house and through outreach to assisted living homes in our community. We will do programs on technology literacy, financial literacy, skill development, and community-building activities. This grant will support the development of memory care kits and an activity collection for library patrons and outreach facilities. Through this initiative, we strive to foster a supportive and engaging environment for our elderly community members.

Grand Valley State University Libraries – “Transcribing Young Lords” - \$25,000.00

The “Transcribing Young Lords” project will transcribe 101 oral history interviews from the Young Lords in Lincoln Park digital collection at Grand Valley State University, to improve accessibility, discoverability, and usability of this important historical resource. The Young Lords in Lincoln Park collection was created by José “Cha-Cha” Jiménez, who founded the Young Lords Organization (YLO) in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Chicago in the late 1960s. The digital and archival collection documents the YLO, its spread to New York, participation in the Rainbow Coalition, and its revival in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 2002.

Henika District Library - “Niche Academy Access and Availability for Patrons” - \$5,260.00

This project will expand available hotspots and provide access to Niche Academy for patrons. The availability of this platform will assist in training and educating patrons in our largely rural community on multiple topics such as available library resources, general digital literacy, internet safety, and more. Many residents lack reliable internet access, so the increase in hotspots available to lend to patrons will allow more community members access to digital services from home as well as the ability to further familiarize themselves with new technologies.

Kalamazoo Public Library – “Albert White Literacy Trail StoryWalk(r) Project” - \$25,000.00

The Kalamazoo Public Library (KPL) is partnering with the Kalamazoo Literacy Council (KLC) to install a permanent StoryWalk® on the Albert White Literacy Trail and Literacy Lane. The area also includes an outdoor reading corner and Little Free Library that is supported by the KPL, the KLC Parent Literacy Together program, and Adult Education and Training Program at Goodwill Industries of Southwestern Michigan. This project will increase access to quality multi-generational literacy and library activities for area residents – from preschool to adult learners and their families. The StoryWalk® will be comprised of a variety of texts curated by KPL, the KLC resident scholars, and other educators with topics including local history, ecology, health, an extraordinary variety of flora and fauna.

Lincoln Township Public Library – “Ageless Adventures” - \$12,000.00

The Lincoln Township Library will implement a virtual reality book club, which offers an innovative way to experience literature by immersing members in the worlds of their favorite books. After reading a selected book, members will don VR headsets to explore virtual environments that mirror the book’s settings. These VR sessions allow for interactive experiences, such as exploring key locations, engaging with characters, and reenacting pivotal scenes. The club also includes regular discussions, either within the VR world or through traditional online meetings, to share insights and deepen their understanding of the book.

Madison Heights Public Library – “Story Strolls: Improving Early Literacy Access” - \$25,000.00

Madison Heights Public Library will create StoryWalk trails in two city parks. Each trail features panels displaying book pages and early literacy tips. Families can enjoy “Story Stroll” outdoor walks led by a librarian while reading and learning together. The project aims to bring early literacy activities beyond the library and school, reaching a broader audience. By integrating literacy into outdoor spaces, we hope to ignite a love for reading and learning in children and families. Additionally, we aim to raise awareness among those who may not typically use library services, showcasing the wealth of free early literacy resources available. Our goal is to foster a more literate and engaged community by making learning accessible and enjoyable for all.

Mason County District Library – “Digital Inclusion in Mason County” - \$25,000.00

Mason County District Library’s remote Tech Help program will provide technology access and guidance to the residents of Mason County. A Mason County resident that has never stepped foot into the library will be able to come to a Tech Help session, sign up for a library card, check out a hotspot and a laptop or e-reader and learn how to use them. Our library staff and a professional technology troubleshooter will visit town halls and community centers throughout the county and offer technical assistance of any kind: issues with phones, computers or tablets, setting up a new email or new Bluetooth headphones we will help.

Pere Marquette District Library – “Library for All: Inclusive Library Services for Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)” - \$24,530.00

The Library for All program aims to provide inclusive library services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This program is a collaborative partnership between the Pere Marquette District Library and the Harrison District Library and is aimed at dismantling environmental and attitudinal barriers to lifelong learning and community engagement for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). Through creating accessible and engaging specialized collections and programs, we will create a welcoming environment that fosters literacy and lifelong learning among individuals with IDD in our communities.

Trenton Veterans Memorial Library – “Downriver Outreach: Bringing Library Services to Underserved Patrons” - \$23,736.00

Downriver Outreach will extend the library’s services to more patrons in our geographically large service area. With an outreach program, homebound patrons and those without transportation will receive delivery of materials and digital devices. A dedicated staff member will manage orders, volunteers and delivery. The outreach program will include classes about smart phones, computers and the internet allowing patrons to use digital services. Increasing the digital literacy of the communities and delivering physical items to those who cannot travel will allow more people to enjoy the library’s collection. Outreach staff in the community will make the library a source of information and literacy to more people.

White Pigeon Township Library - “White Pigeon Township Library Memory Connections” - \$8,306.00

With many older local residents, the need to focus on patrons with memory loss issues has become clear. The White Pigeon Township Library will develop a Memory Connections section of the library offering specialized materials aimed at those with memory loss, and with a concentration on inter-generational relationship building. These multi-sensory kits and activities will aid in triggering memories, opening conversations, and the sharing of knowledge and remembrances. We hope to bring to light the person behind the disease.

If you would like more information about the Library of Michigan grant programs, please go to www.michigan.gov/lsta and see the grant programs sections for program descriptions and documentation.

The Library of Michigan grant programs are made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.