



Council Meeting: October 28, 2008

**SUBJECT: Authorization to Accept and Appropriate \$11,263 Grant Funds from the California State Library for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant Program and Appropriate \$5,506 from Existing Library Foundation Program Grant Project Funds to Provide a Third Year of Access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help, an Online Homework Assistance Program, and Approval of Budget Modification No. 8**

### **REPORT IN BRIEF**

The Sunnyvale Public Library is requesting authorization to accept and appropriate \$11,263 from the California State Library from the LSTA grant program and appropriate \$5,506 of existing Library Foundation Program Grant project funds to provide a total of \$16,769 for a third year of access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help (formerly known as Live Homework Help), both within the Library and remotely through the Library's Web site. Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help is an online homework assistance program provided by Brainfuse. The program connects students in grades 3-12 with English and Spanish-speaking expert tutors in math, science, social studies and English/language arts. Staff recommends that Council accept and appropriate \$11,263 grant funds from the California State Library for the LSTA grant program and appropriate \$5,506 from existing Library Foundation Program Grant project funds to provide a total of \$16,769 for a third year of access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help, an online homework assistance program, and approve Budget Modification No. 8.

### **BACKGROUND**

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) is the successor to the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) and its predecessors, in effect since 1956. Enacted October 1, 1996 and reauthorized in 2003, the LSTA is administered in California by the California State Library. Each year since the inception of the Act, the California State Library has awarded local assistance grants on a competitive basis for locally initiated proposals that meet the purposes of the Act. The LSTA provides support for projects in the areas of services for special populations, technology, resource sharing and inter-agency cooperation. Grants are awarded on a competitive basis.

For the past seven years, the California State Library has provided LSTA funds to allow libraries to provide online homework assistance. Fifty-four library jurisdictions are currently providing access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help with financial support from LSTA funds. The Sunnyvale Public Library applied for the Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help grant in June 2006, and received notification of the grant award in September 2006. The original grant award provided full funding for FY 2006/07 and the option to renew in subsequent years with an incremental decrease in funding support from the State Library through FY 2008/09. Council authorized acceptance of the initial year of funding on October 17, 2006 by approving RTC 06-313 Authorization to Accept \$22,525 Grant Funds from the California State Library for the Library Services and Technology Act Grant Program to Provide Access to Live Homework Help and Authorize Budget Modification

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No. 13. Staff did not return to Council to seek authorization to apply for a second or third year for the Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help grant because the original grant award provided the option to renew without any additional application.

Students access Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help through a link on each participating library's Web site. The goal of the program is to provide after-school homework assistance to students, grades 3-12.

### **EXISTING POLICY**

#### Library Collection

##### Action Statements:

- 6.2A.1c Explore the addition of new formats as technologies change and customer interest indicates
- 6.2A.3a Provide a current and relevant collection of reference resources
- Policy 6.2A.4 Give high priority to providing education support for library users of all ages

##### Action Statements:

- 6.2A.4a Provide materials and services for students in formal education programs
- 6.2A.4b Provide materials and services for independent learners engaged in seeking knowledge and skills through self-directed endeavors

#### Collaboration and Customer Focus

- Policy 6.1F.1 Establish cooperative relationships to maximize the effectiveness of Library services

##### Action Statement:

- 6.2F.1a Partner with local businesses and educational institutions to accomplish mutual goals

### **DISCUSSION**

After the school day ends, students sometimes find themselves without the support of an older student or adult who can help them to understand how to complete a homework assignment. The Sunnyvale Elementary School District offers after-school homework help programs for select students who have been identified by teachers as needing tutoring assistance at six of its eight elementary schools and one of its two middle schools. Fremont High School offers informal tutorials in the school library most days after school, staffed by National Honor Society peer tutors. Students who do not attend these schools or who have not been selected to participate in the tutoring programs may not have the same opportunities for assistance after school.

The Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help program supplements educational services to all students in the community by way of the Sunnyvale Public Library's online connection to expert tutors in English and Spanish from 1 p.m. to 10 p.m. seven days a week. By combining free computer access at the Library with the free tutoring assistance of Out-of-

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School-Time Online Homework Help, this project helps to create equal opportunities for learning and growth for all students. To use this service, users must start from the Sunnyvale Public Library home page.

Beginning in FY 2008/09, the California State Library allowed libraries to negotiate subscription costs with the online homework help vendor of their choice. Library staff evaluated online homework help providers and negotiated with Brainfuse for a subscription price of \$16,769, a \$5,756 savings from the previous one-year cost of \$22,525. In addition to supplying expert tutors who deliver online homework help service, Brainfuse provides skills building lessons aligned with California state school curriculum to help students master key academic areas, and a writing lab with constructive feedback provided on student papers within 24 hours.

The original grant award provided full funding for FY 2006/07 and the option to renew in subsequent years with an incremental decrease in funding support from the State Library through FY 2008/09. The chart below illustrates the levels of support that the California State Library has provided through this grant.

<u>Year</u>	<u>LSTA Grant</u>	<u>Sunnyvale Public Library Costs</u>
2006/07	\$22,525	\$0
2007/08	\$16,894	\$5,631
2008/09	\$11,263	\$5,506
2009/10	\$0	\$16,769

The Library first offered access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help in October 2006. Between October 2006 and June 2008, there were more than 1,600 online homework help sessions conducted for Sunnyvale students. Through surveys distributed at the end of each session, 92% of users said they were glad the Library offers this service, 84% of users said that the service is helping them complete their homework assignments, and 76% indicated the service is helping to improve their grades in school. With this favorable response to the program, Library staff believes that continuation of the program in FY 2008/09 is merited.

To determine if LSTA support will continue to be offered in FY 2009/10 and beyond, the Library will review the service annually. The City will have the option not to renew this service during any of the subsequent years. The Library will review its budget for materials and online resources, and examine library service priorities to decide whether to recommend reallocation of resources within the Library's existing budget in order to pay for the service at the higher rates.

**FISCAL IMPACT**

One year of access to the Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help program costs \$16,769. The California State Library has awarded grant funds in the amount of \$11,263 for this purpose, and staff proposes to transfer \$5,506 from existing Library Foundation Program Grant funds to pay for the remaining subscription amount. If accepted, the grant award will be established as a special project for FY 2008/09.

Authorization to Accept \$11,263 Grant Funds from the California State Library for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant Program and Appropriate \$5,506 from Existing Library Foundation Program Grant Project Funds to Provide a Third Year of Access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help, an Online Homework Assistance Program, and Budget Modification No. 8

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Budget Modification No. 8 has been prepared to accept \$11,263 in new grant funding and to appropriate it to project 826460. Budget Modification No. 8 also appropriates \$5,506 in existing Library Foundation Program Grant Funds to project number 826460.

**Budget Modification No. 8  
Fiscal Year 2008/09**

<b>General Fund</b>	<b><u>Current</u></b>	<b><u>Change</u></b>	<b><u>Revised</u></b>
<b><u>Revenues:</u></b>			
Library Services and Technology Act	\$0	\$11,263	\$11,263
<b><u>Expenditures:</u></b>			
826460: Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help	\$0	\$16,769	\$16,769
805150: Library Foundation Program Grant	\$140,511	(\$5,506)	\$135,005

If the subscription is renewed for FY 2009/10, the Library would be required to pay \$16,769 (100% of the subscription cost). Based on the results of the service and after review and prioritization of the Library's budget for materials and online resources, the Library would decide whether to recommend expenditures within its existing budget to pay for the higher rates to access Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help.

**PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, in the Council Chambers lobby, in the Office of the City Clerk, at the Library, Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; posting the agenda and report on the City's Web site; and making the report available at the Library and the Office of the City Clerk. The Board of Library Trustees reviewed the report at their meeting on October 6, 2008.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. Council accept and appropriate \$11,263 grant funds from the California State Library for the LSTA grant program and appropriates \$5,506 from existing Library Foundation Program Grant project funds to provide a third year of access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help, an online homework assistance program, and approve Budget Modification No. 8.
2. Council reject \$11,263 from the California State Library for the Library Services and Technology Act Funds.

Authorization to Accept \$11,263 Grant Funds from the California State Library for the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant Program and Appropriate \$5,506 from Existing Library Foundation Program Grant Project Funds to Provide a Third Year of Access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help, an Online Homework Assistance Program, and Budget Modification No. 8

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**RECOMMENDATION**

At the October 6, 2008 Board of Library Trustees meeting, the Board voted unanimously to recommend to Council Alternative 1 which accepts and appropriates \$11,263 grant funds from the California State Library for the LSTA grant program and appropriates \$5,506 from existing Library Foundation Program Grant project funds to provide a third year of access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help, an online homework assistance program, and approves Budget Modification No. 8.

Staff also recommends Alternative #1. The online homework assistance program will continue to create opportunities for learning and growth for all Sunnyvale students.

Reviewed by:

Susan W. Denniston, Interim Director, Library  
Prepared by: Steve Sloan, Administrative Librarian

Mary Bradley, Director, Finance

Approved by:

Amy Chan  
City Manager

**Attachments**

- A. Award Letter, California State Library
- B. Draft Board of Library Trustees Meeting Minutes of 10/6/08

# Attachment A

August 26, 2008



Susan Denniston, Interim Director  
Sunnyvale Public Library  
665 W. Olive Avenue  
Sunnyvale, CA 94086-7622

Dear Ms. Denniston:

I am pleased to approve the grant application for the Out of School Time Online Homework Help for a total of \$11,263 in federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds.

I am pleased with the continued success of California's Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help program. Our plan to sustain existing sites by sharing the cost of online homework help subscriptions has allowed us to expand the program to more libraries throughout the state. I am glad that your library has decided to continue to participate in this program and applaud your efforts to identify permanent funding streams and/or partnerships to support this program in the future.

The State Library will use Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds to support at least 50 percent of the cost of this year's subscription fee. The library is responsible for paying the balance. Since this is your final year in the program, please be aware that your library will be expected to pay 100 percent of the cost in 2009/10 should you decide to continue online homework help after the grant cycle ends. The State Library's contribution may change depending on the availability of LSTA funds that can be allocated for this targeted grant program in 2008/09.

Please note that as per your library's request, this grant award is being made directly to the above named library and will not use the Metropolitan Cooperative Library System (MCLS) as an intermediary with the vendor chosen for the Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Program.

The Library Development Services Staff is ready to assist you in making your project a success. Please understand that no grant payments can be processed until the governor signs the State budget. State processing of grant payments can require 6-8 weeks before you receive your check.

Best wishes for a successful project year.

Yours truly,

Susan Hildreth  
State Librarian of California

Enclosures

cc: Colette Moody  
Cindy Mediavilla  
Steve Sloan

# Attachment B

**PUBLIC HEARINGS/GENERAL BUSINESS:**

2. Draft RTC: Authorization to Accept \$11,263 Grant Funds from the California State Library for the Library Services and Technology Act Grant Program and Appropriate \$5,506 from Existing Library Foundation Program Grant Project Funds to Provide a Third Year of Access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help, an Online Homework Assistance Program, and Approval of Budget Modification No. 8:

Interim Director Denniston provided the Board with an overview of the RTC. This is the third year of the grant program. Services have been contracted with Brainfuse. Discussion ensued regarding grant funds, vendor selection criteria and language assistance offered.

Chair Griffith opened the public hearing and there being no public testimonies, closed the public hearing.

**Vice Chair Lilly moved, and Boardmember Pathak seconded, to recommend to Council alternative no. 1 which accepts and appropriates \$11,263 grant funds from the California State Library for the Library Services and Technology Act grant program and appropriates \$5,506 from existing Library Foundation Program Grant project funds to provide a third year of access to Out-of-School-Time Online Homework Help, an online homework assistance program, and approves Budget Modification No. 8. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Boardmember Su stated that this is a great program to support.**

3. Draft RTC: Authorization to Accept \$10,000 Grant Funds, Equipment and Training in FY 2008/09 and \$5,000 Project Continuation Grant Funds in FY 2009/10 from the California State Library for the Library Services and technology Act Digital Storytelling Station Grant Program, and Approval of Budget Modification No. 9:

Interim Director Denniston provided the Board with an overview of the RTC. The Sunnyvale Historical Society and Museum Association and the Sunnyvale Public Library partnered for this grant. Discussion ensued promotion of grant program identifying storytellers. Suggestions for storytellers included Onizuka Airforce Base/Moffett and Martin Family.

Chair Griffith opened the public hearing and there being no public testimonies, closed the public hearing.

**Boardmember Su moved, and Vice Chair Lilly seconded, to recommend to Council alternative no. 1 which accepts and appropriates \$10,000 grant funds, along with equipment and training in FY 2008/09 and accepts \$5,000 project continuation grant funds in FY 2009/10 from the California State Library for the Library Services and Technology Act Digital Storytelling Station grant program, and approves Budget Modification No. 9. Motion carried unanimously.**

4. Library Branch Study:

Interim Director Denniston provided an overview of Council and Board of Library Trustees Joint Study Session which was held on Tuesday, September 30. A project status update was provided. Discussion ensued regarding potential sites being investigated. It is anticipated that the Draft RTC: Exploration of a Branch Library in Sunnyvale (Study Issue) will not be available for the Monday, November 3 Board of Library Trustees meeting. Therefore, the meeting has been canceled. A Special Board of Library Trustees meeting will be held on Monday, November 10 at 7 p.m. in the Library Program Room.