Thank you for your interest in the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation’s annual Access to Learning Award (ATLA). This award recognizes the innovative efforts of libraries or similar organizations outside the United States to connect people to information through free access to computers and the Internet. The recipient of the award will receive $1 million (U.S.).

Applications must be submitted by30 September 2012.

**Please read this important information about eligibility and selection before completing the application.**

**APPLICATION OVERVIEW**

What is the philosophy behind the award?

Computers and the Internet are powerful tools that provide opportunities for people to improve their social and economic well-being. They can help individuals, regardless of age, race, incomeor geography, pursue education and employment, access government services, learn about valuable health information, conduct business online, and exchange information and ideas.

The foundation’s Global Libraries initiative is dedicated to opening a world of knowledge and opportunity by partnering with public libraries to provide free access to computers and the Internet. Previous Access to Learning Award (ATLA) recipients are helping people in some of the world’s most remote and poverty-stricken areas live healthier, more productive lives. ATLA highlights the innovative ways libraries and similar organizations areproviding services to people in needand aims to promote development and replication of new ways to increase public access to information technology around the world.

*What kinds of institutions may apply?*

We invite public libraries or similar organizations outside the United States to apply, if they currently provide free public access to information through the use of computers and the Internet. The foundation particularly encourages applications from institutions in developing countries or those working with disadvantaged communities. We will give preference to organizations that reach out to underserved groups, such as poor or disabled patrons, or those from minoritycommunities, as long as the organization still provides services to all members of the community.

*Are there any restrictions on the institutions that may apply?*

Yes – in addition to basic requirements, such as the current provision of free public access to computers and the Internet, please note the following restrictions on organizations considering an application for the Access to Learning Award:

* No US organizations are eligible to apply. That includes US organizations that operate in locations outside of the US. If a US organization works through a local organization outside the US, the local organization would be encouraged to apply.
* Organizations that are current or former grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (including Global Health grantees) are not eligible to apply.
* Only ONE (1) organization may apply per application. The Foundation does not accept joint applications for the ATLA program.
* If the applicant organization operates multiple computer centers/access points, ALL access points must currently provide free public access to computers and the Internet. The foundation will not accept applications from organizations who charge fees at some, but not all, of their centers/access points.

*How is "free public access" defined?*

A library or similar organization offers “free public access” to computers and the Internet if it allows all members of the public—without exception—to use these tools and its facilities free of charge. Organizations must show how they make technology services available to the public in a community space without charging any membership or access fees and must detail the types of technology training they offer to the public and their staff. Organizations that restrict services or charge fees to access the facilities or use the computers and the Internet are not eligible. Please note that, for the purposes of the ATLA, “access” is meant as the provision of computers with Internet connections in a physical space (i.e. projects focused primarily on the provision of digital content, online databases, or software, fall outside the scope of this award.) However, any specific questions regarding eligibility should be sent via email tothe program administrator at atla@gatesfoundation.org.

*What is considered innovative?*

Innovative programs provide access to information through technology and services that were previously not available to the community. Programs of any size or scope are considered. We will specifically look for ground-breaking Internet connectivity, training, and sustainable models and programs that creatively reach underserved communities.

*How will the foundation determine whether an organization is effective at providing free access to computers and the Internet?*

A program is considered an effective provider of free technology services when it offers tools, training, and guidance that directly benefit individuals and their communities. Examples of this can include helping farmers use technology to learn about crop prices and improved practices, teaching job seekers how to increase their technology skills and find employment over the Internet, and showing students how to use web-based resources in their coursework. In addition to providing anecdotal evidence of these types of successes, the foundation encourages applicants to demonstrate measured impacts on individuals through quantitative data if possible.

*Is this award intended to fund a proposed project or activity?*

No. The ATLA is a one-time recognition, or prize, for organizations that have created programs currently providing free access to computers and the Internet for the public. The award is to recognize services currently being provided.

*Are there any restrictions as to how the award funds are spent?*

Yes. The award funds must be spent exclusively in furtherance of the charitable, educational, scientific, or literary purposes of the recipient organization. In addition, no portion of the award funds may be used to support efforts to influence legislation or participate in campaign activities in support of or against political candidates. The award recipient must agree to these restrictions on the use of the foundation's funds in order to accept the award. Upon selection, the ATLA recipient will be asked by the foundation to describe in greater detail how the award funds will be used. Award recipients are required to report to the foundation at regularly scheduled intervals onthe use of the funding and to hold the funding in foundation-approved bank accounts.

Can institutions that applied previously apply again this year?

Yes.Eligible libraries or similar organizations are invited to apply again. Previous award recipients may not reapply. Past applicants are encouraged to incorporate any reviewer feedback received from previous applications to the ATLA. The Foundation would also encourage previous applicants to provide updated/new information applicable to their organization’s technology access initiatives that has occurred since their previous submission.

**PROCESS FOR SELECTION**

An award administrator receives and acknowledges each ATLA submission, screening all applications for eligibility. After initial screening for eligibility, an international advisory committee comprised of librarians, information technology experts, and foundation staff evaluates applications based on candidates’ innovative efforts to:

* make computers and Internet access free to the public
* train the public in using technology and accessing information
* educate staff on technology use
* reach out to underserved communities
* demonstrate how other communities might replicate the applicant’s approach

The committee then selects a list of final candidates for consideration by the Bill & Melinda Gates foundation. Following an independent financial and organizational review of those finalists, the foundation selects the final recipient.

\*Please note: All information contained in an organization’s application may be subject to independent verification during the Foundation’s due diligence process. Discovery of falsified or misrepresented information will result in immediate disqualification and removal of the organization from consideration, and may jeopardize an applicant's eligibility to future ATLA competitions.

**Timeline:**

An award administrator will inform all ATLA applicants of their status by July 2013.

The 2013 ATLA recipient will be publicly announced in August 2013 at the World Library and Information Congress of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).

**APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

Please use the web-based electronic proposal system (EPS) to prepare your application for submission. The EPS will supply step-by-step instructions on submitting your application to the 2013 ATLA competition. You will create a unique account that will allow you to prepare your application over multiple online sessions. On this website, information from Section I will be entered directly online during the application process. Download the Word document that contains Sections II-VI. Once the appropriate information has been entered within this document, save it to your computer and upload it into the EPS during the submission process.

 Please follow these additional guidelines when submitting your proposal:

* Applications must be written in English.
* Applications must be submitted via the online EPS.  Access to the EPSmay be found at [www.gatesfoundation.org/ATLA](http://www.gatesfoundation.org/ATLA).Submissions sent via E-Mail with the application document attached *will not* be accepted.
* All applicants must confirm that the information in the application is accurate to the best of their ability and authorize its submission. To do so they must check the box at the end of the application that states, “I confirm that the information provided in this application is accurate to the best of my knowledge and ability, and that by checking this box, I authorize submission of this application and all information contained to the 2013 ATLA Competition.”
* Sections II-VI of the application must be uploaded as a .doc, .docx, .rtf, or .pdf file.
* The foundation also encourages you to provide weblinks to scholarly literature, YouTube videos, or specific sections of your organization’s website where appropriate as supplementary evidence. However, the Foundation will not review additional information attached to the end of an application. This includes, but is not limited to, photographs, letters of support, additional testimony, etc. This information should be linked to in the body of the narrative and should not be placed at the end of the application.
* Please ensure that the E-Mail addresses indicated are valid and correct. Errors in providing a valid E-Mail address may prevent you from receiving important updates about your application.
* In order to avoid technical problems during submission, the foundation recommends submitting your application at least 24 hours before the deadline to ensure receipt.
* If you have any questions about the online submission process, please contact theprogram administrator at ATLA@gatesfoundation.org.

**Applications must be submitted by 30September 2012.**

Please submit your application beginning with pagefive of this document. Please note that some additional information must be submitted through the online electronic proposal system.

(See Application Guidelines above)

2013 ATLA Application: Table of Contents

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**(Please Enter Appropriate Information on the Web Site)**

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# APPLICATION COVER SHEET

Application Title:

Organization Name:

Organization Address:

Country:

Organization’s Website (if applicable):

Primary Contact Person:

E-Mail Address for Primary Contact Person:

# Section II: Applicant Statistics

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. What is the tax status or structure of your organization? (Type an X next to the appropriate answer)
 |  | Public library (e.g., government funded) |
|  | Other library organization (please describe) |
|  | International Nongovernmental organization |
|  | Local Nongovernmental Organization |
|  | Other (please describe) |
| 1. General population of the area served by your organization (Type an X next to the appropriate answer)
 |  | Under 25,000 |
|  | 25,000-100,000 |
|  | 100,000-500,000 |
|  | 500,000-1,000,000 |
|  | More than 1,000,000 |
| 1. Average number of hours your organization is open to the public each day
 |  |
| 1. Average number of days your organization is open each week
 |  |
| 1. Average number of users your organization serves per day
 |  |
| 1. Average number of users your organization serves per year
 |  |
| 1. Number of computers reserved exclusively for public usage at your organization?
 |  |
| 1. Number of full-time staff at your organization
 |  |
| 1. Number of part-time staff at your organization
 |  |
| 1. Number of volunteers at your organization
 |  |
| 1. Number of computers reserved exclusively for staff usage at your organization
 |  |
| 1. Statistical Methodology: Please briefly describe the way in which you calculated the above statistics (General Population, Users per Day, Users per Year)
 |  |

# Section III: Applicant Services

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Type an X next to the services that you ***currently offer at no charge.***
 |  | Book lending |
|  | Reference services |
|  | Computer usage |
|  | Internet usage |
|  | User computer training |
|  | Other (please list) |
| 1. Do you have Internet connectivity? (Type an X next to the appropriate answer)
 | Yes |  | No |  |
| If yes, what type of connectivity? |
|  | Dial-up |
|  | Broadband |
|  | Other (please specify) |
| 1. Do you charge a membership fee? If so, please explain which users are required to pay this fee and to which services they are applied (see question #4 below and question 4 of the narrative).
 | Yes |  | No |  |
| 1. If yes, please indicate the types of services for which you charge (Type an X next to all that apply)
 |  | General Membership fee required to access all services provided by the organization |
|  | Membership fee (not required to access computers and Internet) |
|  | Internet usage |
|  | Overdue books |
|  | Printing and Photocopying |
|  | Computer Training (Basic) |
|  | Computer Training (Advanced) |
|  | Other (Please Describe) |
| 1. Are there any members of the public that ***are not*** permitted to use your computer and Internet Services **free of charge?**
 | Yes |  | No |  |
| 1. Type an X next to the kinds of free computer training that you offer to the public
 |  | Basic Computer Usage |
|  | Word Processing |
|  | Using Email |
|  | Using the Internet |
|  | Using computers and the Internet to search for jobs/write resumes |
|  | Specialized Internet search classes on specific topics (such as health care, agriculture, etc.) |
|  | Other (please list) |

# Section IV: Applicant Finances

What is the annual operating budget of your organization? Please state in US dollars using the most current exchange rate. Please include the exchange rate you use for this calculation in your response below.

*(NOTE: It is not necessary to submit a detailed budget, but you must supply an estimate of your organization’s total budget for the year.)*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Total Annual Operating Budget: |  |
| Exchange Rate: |  |

# Section V: References

If your application is selected for further consideration, your organization may be contacted for a review of your programs, administration, and financing. This review will be conducted by an independent intermediary organization on the Foundation’s behalf and may include a site visit. During this review, the references that you provide below will be contacted.

## Contact Information for Primary Funder of Applicant’s Organization

Please list contact information for your organization’s main source of funding. If there is more than one major source of funding, please submit information for each. Simply cut and paste this table as needed. If there is no main funding source (for example, your organization sustains itself through private donations), please indicate this below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Organization |  |
| Number of years as funder |  |
| Name of Contact at Organization |  |
| Title of Contact at Organization |  |
| Mailing Address |  |
| City |  |
| State/Province |  |
| Zip Code |  |
| Country |  |
| Website (if applicable) |  |
| Phone |  |
| Fax |  |
| E-Mail address |  |

## Contact Information for General Reference

A reference can be a colleague or professional organization that knows about your organization and is willing to speak about its accomplishments and impact. General references should be from someone **outside of your organization**who is familiar with its work and accomplishments.You may submit contact information for more than one reference but only one is required. Simply cut and paste this table as needed (*\*Please limit to no more than three General References*).

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of Contact |  |
| Title of Contact |  |
| Name of Organization with which Contact is Affiliated |  |
| Mailing Address |  |
| City |  |
| State/Province |  |
| Zip Code |  |
| Country |  |
| Website of Organization (if applicable) |  |
| Phone |  |
| Fax |  |
| E-Mail Address |  |

# Section VI: Application Narrative:

In this section, please answer each question as thoroughly as possible. The foundation encourages you to cite specific evidence (either through anecdotes/personal testimonies or statistics) whenever possible. Your completed narrative should not exceed **8 pages total** (including the text of each question). Please complete the application in **Arial 10pt font with one-inch margins on each side**. The foundation also encourages you to provide weblinks to scholarly literature, YouTube™ videos, photographs, or specific sections of your organization’s website, where appropriate as supplementary evidence. Please **DO NOT** paste photographs or additional information outside of the application narrative at the end of the document; supplementary information should be provided as web links ONLY.

1. Please give a brief description of your organization, including its vision, mission and date founded.
2. Please describe your general program(s) for providing free public access to computers and the Internet. Who is permitted/able to access these programs? Does your organization offer any programs directed towards specific audiences (e.g. rural communities, farmers, women, children, persons with disabilities, elderly people, etc.)?
3. What groups, if any, are not permitted to access your organization’s computer and Internet services and why? Please note that this refers to any members of the public that are not allowed to use your computer and Internet services at any point throughout the year. This *does not include* individuals with special needs for whom you do not have adequate resources and technology to provide service.
4. What fees, if any, are applied to members of the community and to what services are they applied? (If you indicated fees in Question 4, Section III (Applicant Services), please describe here)
5. In what ways is your organization currently providing free computer and Internet services to the public? How is your approach and/or program innovative? The term “innovative” may apply to the programs, services, or methods used in providing free computer and Internet services.
6. Please describe how other organizations might learn from your innovative approach and replicate your activities within their communities. Have your activities been replicated by other organizations in your region and/or internationally? Have your activities been published in scholarly literature as examples of best practices? If these are not applicable, please describe what makes your approach practical for other organizations. Please be as specific as possible.
7. How does your organization help the public learn to use technology and find information using computers and the Internet? Please include any specific trainings, including topics, instructor certifications, curricula, and class size.
8. How does your organization ensure that staff are capable users of new technologies and are able to train users on how to use those technologies? Please include professional development courses, frequency and availability to staff, and/or certifications received by staff members.
9. Describe the impact of your organization’s computer/Internet programs. What has your organization accomplished? How do you know that your computer/Internet programs have made a difference in people’s lives? We encourage you to use anecdotes, case studies, and, if possible, measured evidence of the impact of your programs on the public.
10. What are the future goals of your organization? Please describe your plans to sustain your services into the future.
11. Please briefly describe how you plan to use the award funds. If selected as a finalist, you may be asked to submit a more detailed budget.
12. Please briefly summarize why you feel your organization’s work should be considered for this award.

# Section VII: Application Submission Checklist:

In order to avoid errors and incomplete information, we encourage you to review the following steps in the preparation of your application before submitting:

1. You have read and understood the eligibility criteria and selection process for the 2013 ATLA Award
2. You have filled out all required fields on the “Applicant Organization Contact Information” page
3. You have filled out, to the best of your ability and knowledge, the 2013 ATLA Application Form[[1]](#footnote-2), including:
	* 1. Application Cover Sheet
		2. Applicant Organization Statistics
		3. Applicant Organization Services
		4. Applicant Organization Finances
		5. Reference(s) for Organization’s Primary Funder
		6. General Reference(s)
		7. Application Narrative
4. You have reviewed the application to ensure all information submitted is accurate to the best of your ability and knowledge. At this point, you may signify that by checking the appropriate box in the Electronic Proposal System website and submit the application. ***Please note that once you have submitted your application it will not be available for future revisions. If you discover information should be corrected or updated after you have submitted, please contact anAward Administrator at*** ***ATLA@gatesfoundation.org******.***
1. Must be filled out in the provided Word Document, saved, and uploaded through the Electronic Proposal Submission (EPS) site. You may also save/upload the completed application as an rtf or pdf file. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)