

Sergeant Bluff Public Library (Sergeant Bluff, IA)

Library type: Public library (community size: <4,999)

Topic: Services for seniors (especially during COVID)

Funds used for: Conversation materials (Zoom subscription, promotion, refreshments, etc.), staff time, additional programming expenses (determined from conversation), materials for seniors and library

What the reviewers liked about this proposal: Applicant provides a strong budget with well-defined categories

Community and Library Information

Describe your library and the community it serves, including demographics, dynamics and key issues or challenges it faces. What should reviewers know about your library and community in order to understand your proposed community engagement project?

Sergeant Bluff Iowa is a small town in Northwest Iowa, at the foot of the historic Loess Hills, on the Missouri River. The town is close to Omaha Nebraska, Sioux City, Iowa, and Sioux Falls, South Dakota. It is a tight-knit community with a lot of community support, and a strong school district. The Sergeant Bluff-Luton School District serves the town, with approximately 1500 students enrolled between pre-kindergarten and 12th grade. The town has a large brick manufacturer, is near the Port Neal Industrial Complex, and near the 185th Air National Guard Refueling Wing. As of the 2010 census, the median age in the city was 35.5 years. 32.1% of residents were under the age of 18; 6.7% were between the ages of 18 and 24; 26.3% were from 25 to 44; 25.4% were from 45 to 64; and 9.3% were 65 years of age or older. The gender makeup of the city was 48.9% male and 51.1% female. A big issue the town has is services and recreational activities for its senior residents. The town is home to three nursing homes/rehab centers, and has a senior housing development. The challenge is to find services and programs that fill the needs and wants of this segment of the population. Especially now, with the pandemic affecting especially this age group, the community, and the library struggles to find programs for this population and we need to look for unique ways to provide programs and services to this population. The Sergeant Bluff Public Library was formally established in 2017, so we are still a new and growing library. We currently have a yearly budget of \$12,500 due to being new, so funds for programs are scarce. We have increasing patronage, and most of our regular adult patrons are seniors over 65.

Conversation Topic or Issue*

Describe the topic or issue that your community engagement project will focus on. Why is it important for your library or community to discuss this particular issue/topic? How did you arrive at this particular topic/subject (e.g. did you talk with library patrons, reach out to other area organizations? Dig into data about your community)? How will your library and/or community benefit from having this/these discussion(s)?

The topic we plan to discuss is how the community and library can better serve the over 60 population, especially now with the pandemic, and this being a vulnerable population. We want to discuss different services they may need such as home delivery of library items, programs we can offer possibly online, or in small groups socially distanced that focus on information they need such as computer skills, information on applying for services such as Social Security, insurance, retirement, as well as health and wellness. It is important that we discuss this because there isn't currently much done for this

segment of the population, and we are having to reimagine how to provide services and programs to this population due to the pandemic. There are lots of things for younger families to do - swimming at the local pool, parks to play in, walking trails throughout town, and a sports complex at the rec center. There currently aren't many services or programs geared toward the senior population and now more than ever, it needs to be addressed. We arrived at this topic from a discussion with the City Administrator and City Council. They want to get feedback from this senior population to see how as a town, library and recreational center, we can all serve them better. We have also talked with the American Legion, and the rec center director as well, and plan to partner with the city, American Legion and Rec Center if we receive this grant.

The community will greatly benefit from this as this will help steer us in the right direction to provide needed and desired programs and new services potentially that we haven't before such as home delivery service to shut ins and residents of nursing homes in town, or book club for seniors. We hope this will help keep the senior residents engaged in the community, and create a sense of belonging, when so many of them have felt isolated and cut off due to the ongoing pandemic. It will also help the library become more visible to the entire community, and show that we are a vital part of the community with the programs and services we provide. By partnering with the City, Parks and Rec, and the American Legion, we feel the partnerships will strengthen the library and benefit our partners as well by cross-promoting.

Conversation Goals*

Describe the library's goal or purpose of your project plan. What are you aiming to accomplish? (e.g. enhance library resources based on community input; explore a topic and/or build understanding of others' experiences; generate ideas, explore options, and make a decision; discuss an issue and collaboratively determine next steps, etc.)

We have several goals in mind for this conversation. We foremost want to find out what is lacking for services and programs for seniors, and talk about how the library and it's partners can fill in those gaps with programs and services that this population will use. We expect that the conversation will generate a lot of ideas we had not thought of, which will guide us to explore options for implementing programs and services we may not have thought of previously. We feel this conversation will help us in determining the next steps with our community partners to develop a collaborative plan to start programs and services in the near future. We hope to develop life long learning opportunities geared to seniors that we could provide in possibly several ways - in person presentations, recorded Zoom meetings, and possibly recorded programs we would place on a YouTube channel that people can watch at their leisure. We expect we will uncover other avenues of reaching this population as well by getting their ideas and feedback. We also hope to enhance and add to our current library resources such as large print books, audiobooks for those who need these. This is an area we are lacking, and hope that this is something we find through our conversation that residents need. Having these resources will also help us start an outreach program for homebound residents, and residents of nursing homes in town.

Conversation Planning*

How do you envision your conversation taking place? (e.g. virtual book club discussion, socially-distanced conversation outdoors at the library using the National Issues Forum Model, etc.) Do you

feel you are able to describe how you envision your conversation(s) will take place? Or are you new to this and planning to learn these skills though the online course? What kind of marketing/outreach do you plan to do for the conversation? How are you planning to share the content/outcomes of the conversation? (e.g. writing an article for the local newspaper, creating a video about what was discussed for the library's social media, etc.)

I envision our conversation taking place at the rec center, located next to the library, which has a large gymnasium that can be used to set up a socially distanced group, as well as setting up a Zoom room for people who would like to participate but do not feel comfortable doing so in person. We plan to use the Conversation Cafe model or the Livingroom Conversation model for facilitating the conversation, depending on the size of the group. I am new to presenting community conversations, so I plan on learning how to do this through the online course. Marketing and outreach: I plan to write articles in the local newspaper leading up to the conversation, as well as putting information requesting participation on all of our social media accounts, as well as having our partners share via their social media and other media outlets they use. I also plan to personally ask patrons in this age group if they would participate. I will share the outcomes with the community in several ways. Through social media posts, newspaper article, and reports to partners and the City Council. I also plan to gather email addresses during the conversation so that I may let participants know the outcome of the conversation as well. We are also planning on starting a podcast in the next few months, and we will talk about the outcomes on the podcast.

Budget*

Describe your plans for the grant funds. What will you use the funding to purchase or support? Please be specific (e.g. \$1,000 will be spent on staff time to support the development and implementation of the project, \$200 will be used to purchase a Zoom Business license in order for us to virtually host our conversation). The total amount of your proposed budget plan should add up to \$3,000. Note: If you are unable to spend the entire grant down by July 31, 2021, you may accrue funds to spend through February 28, 2022. If you anticipate needing to accrue funds, please note this in your response and include your plans for spending it down.

Budget:

Zoom subscription: Pro subscription: \$150 to virtually host our conversation and use for programs developed out of the conversation.

Printing promotional flyers and handouts for conversation: \$100

Refreshments for conversation: for snacks and drinks \$100

Staff time for development and implementation: \$500

Cost for speakers to facilitate programs decided on from the conversation: \$1000

Costs for additional software and hardware to facilitate programs: \$500

Totes for home deliveries of library materials to shut-ins: \$150

Purchase large print books and audio books for anticipated programs: \$500

Total: \$3000