PLP Innovation and Technology Opportunity Grant Program Application

Library Name: Palo Alto City Library

Project Title: Harvest at your library

Select criteria that you are applying under (check all that apply):

- Service that introduces a new idea, program or vision that is not currently used in libraries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Service that may benefit other PLP members in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Service that may benefit other California libraries in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Please provide a one paragraph project summary.

Palo Alto City Library’s Robots in Library programs has won the Top Innovator Award at 2020 Transforming Local Government conference. It is also the recipient of the 2019 Top Innovator’s Award given by Urban Libraries Council. Using robots funded with previous PLP Innovation and Technology grants, we have designed our program series chiefly with children and youth in mind. We helped fill the knowledge gap between what our communities want to learn more about and what our school systems can realistically provide. With a new round of funding from PLP, we plan to expand the robotic programs by setting up a FarmBot at the library’s rooftop garden. Using this open-source agriculture robot, we will develop a series of programs mainly for engaging seniors in the community.

2. Please provide a detailed description of the proposed project including the population served and the demographics of that population.

The intended audience for the project will mainly be seniors. Currently there are thirteen senior living facilities in the City of Palo Alto. 15% of the City’s population of 67,082 is over 70 years of age. We will use the grant to purchase one FarmBot Genesis kit (size 1.5mx3m), and install it at the open garden on the second floor of the Mitchell Park Library. We will invite participation.

The project mainly has four components:
- Have one-on-one appointment with seniors to learn the drag and drop FarmBot interface to plant seed of their choice at the library.
- Evaluate their comfort level for one-on-one appointment, and note their feedback and concerns with the service.
• Experiment with live video streaming of the FarmBot garden, and provide free online access to all customers.
• Develop a model to share with PLP libraries.

3. What are the goals and objectives of the project?

**Two goals:**
- Use the project as a way to build an engaging service model for introducing technologies to seniors
- Play a role in building up seniors’ confidence in exploring emerging technologies to improve their lives

**Objectives include:**
- Introduce new agriculture robotics technology to seniors
- Provide one-on-one service for seniors to learn robotics technology
- Develop training documentation on how to use FarmBot
- Experiment on real-time online streaming of the robotics garden
- Gauge customer’s interest in similar programs for future use

4. Explain how this project fits with the library’s strategic directions.

One of the goals of the Library's Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 is to "Leverage technology to integrate the library into the lives of community members.” As California’s senior population will increase by an estimated 87 percent over the next two decades according to Public Policy Institute of California’s data, it is our belief that introducing robotics technologies designed for seniors as well as developing library programs for them fits well with the Library’s strategic direction.

5. Please include your project timeline (include detail of activities).

**Phase I: Farmbot deployment**
- Purchase one FarmBot Genesis kit
- Install FarmBot at Mitchell Park Library
- Test run FarmBot by eLibrary staff

**Phase II: Staff training**
- Develop training documentation for staff
- Train staff

**Phase III: Pilot program**
- Design the workflow of the one-on-one appointment or the virtual service
- Develop script for customer interactions, including set questions to gauge customer experiences and record comments.
- Try it out in a pilot program and make adjustments
Phase IV: Launch the service
- Schedule the regular events, or publish the online form and launch phone service
- Start marketing and promotion on the library’s website

Phase V: Wrap Up
- Analyze feedback and comments
- Finalize documentation

6. Please include your project budget. (Note: Indirect costs are not allowed).

- Hardware: $3,256.71 (FarmBot Genesis v1.5 Pre-Order $2,995 + tax $232.12 + shipping fee $29.59)
- Installation: $1800 for installation time (40 hours at $45/hour)

Total budget: $5056.71

7. Please indicate how you will evaluate success of your project.

We will evaluate the project mainly by comparing the end results with the project goals and objectives:

We will report back on the following outcomes:
- Customer comfort level with using FarmBot, or customer feedback of the virtual service
- Number and duration of services, views and duration of live streaming video
- Technical difficulties on the experiment of providing live streaming to all customers
- Recommendations for how FarmBot can be used in public programs

8. Please indicate how the project will be sustained after the grant term is over.

Currently, the roof top garden at Mitchell Park Library is minimally maintained. With the project’s investment, FarmBot will enable the Library to fully utilize this outdoor space and convert it into a special place for the community. The project’s output will provide the Library with a long-term community engagement venue. In addition, FarmBot will allow Palo Alto Library staff to continue contributing to the PLP library communities our technical expertise for making service improvements.