



# Fostering Conviviality in Communities

**Deadline:** February 23, 2035

**Application:** [FY 2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity \(https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/fy25-ols-appnofo.pdf\)](https://www.ims.gov/sites/default/files/fy25-ols-appnofo.pdf) (pdf 320KB)

**Grant Amount:** \$75,000 - \$100,000 or BTC equivalent

**Grant Period:** 3 years

**Cost Share Requirement:** None

**Open Source Documentation Requirement:** Yes

## Background

Following the passage of the Public Domain and Copyright In the Digital Age Act in 2025 (PDCDA), public libraries saw an unprecedented rise in usage of materials. It has never been easier for public library patrons to get access to information goods. This includes both historical material digitized due to regulatory and funding opportunities provided by PDCDA and newest releases in books, films, video games and periodicals, due to novel library-friendly content licensing and loaning mechanisms. However, as it become easier to get access to information digitally, the public has become increasingly reliant on libraries to satisfy other social and civic needs of the patrons. In their role as the only remaining truly public and open space, libraries continue to provide information goods and services as well as programming. At the same time, technological, economic and social factors have continued to intensify citizens' sense of isolation and loneliness across the country. With income inequality that has been stagnant at highest levels since the beginning of the 20th century, and with social development indicators (depression, suicide rate, community trust, civic participation, and others) at alarming rates, public libraries are called on to tackle these realities in new ways.

## Program Overview

Fostering Conviviality in Communities (FCC) is a special initiative of the National Civic Engagement in Public Libraries (NCEPL) program. The goal of this initiative is to increase convivial interactions and relationships in local communities. In this initiative, the term conviviality refers to collaborative, autonomous and creative interactions by and among library patrons in their communities. IMLS invites applicants that focus on the following topics.

1. Convivial Interactions
2. Conviviality with Non-Humans
3. Spiritual and Mental Conviviality

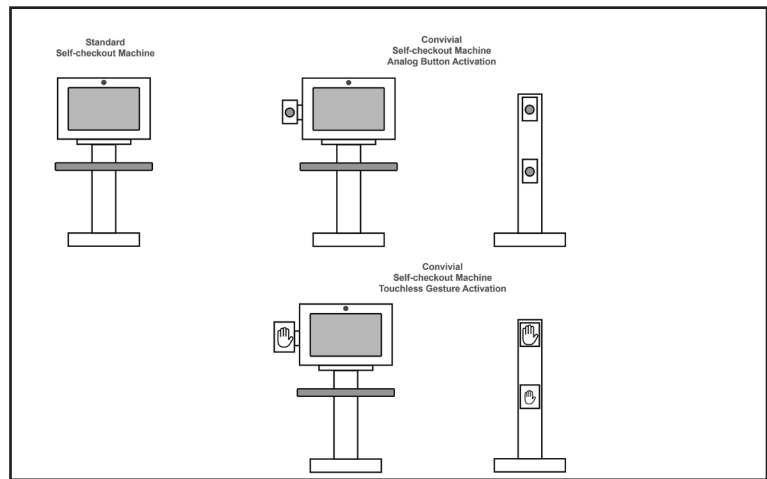
The following descriptions and examples are based on past grant awards. They are for illustrative purposes only. Applicants are encouraged to develop proposals that address unique contexts of their communities.

### 1. Convivial Interactions

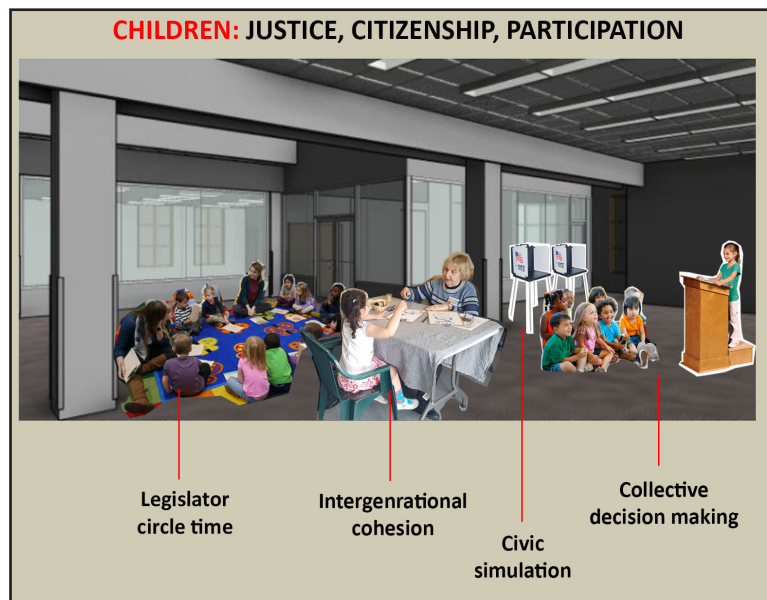
This topic covers technological and social interventions in the library space that encourage interactions among two more people. These interactions can be both creative or mundane and do not always require the patrons to be acquainted with each other. Convivial interactions often cause things to slow down rather than speed up.

**Example 1-1: Convivial Self-Checkout**

The self-checkout machine requires two people to activate it simultaneously. The machine can be activated by a button (touch sensor) or gesture. This example is from Boston Public Library (Grant number [IMLS-CCV-2031-01](#)). The machine serves as an intervention and a reminder for the patrons that slowing down, asking for help from and engaging in activities with strangers is an important part of a healthy and happy community.

**Example 1-2: Conviviality as Civic Education**

This example reiterates that grant proposals need not rely on technological solution. The Phoenix Public Library has developed a series of programs targeted at children to foster conviviality in service of civic participation (Grant number [IMLS-CCV-2032-12](#)). Children are not only taught how to participate democratic process, but are empowered to make decisions at a small scale. These decisions cover simple issues within the library, such as organization of library furniture and artwork on a regular basis, and in the community such as selecting a tree planting site or allocating funds for small public arts projects in parks, playgrounds and schools. The program includes work with local governments, educational institutions and non-profits to create new infrastructures to enable such participation.

**2. Conviviality with Non-Humans**

This topic includes proposals for libraries to foster human connectivity and collective action with animals and machines. Emphasis should be placed on working and living with a non-human entity as a community, rather than instrumental values, such as increased productivity, effectiveness or convenience.

**Example 2.1. Quilting Companions**

The quilting machines are part of the elderly program in the Seattle Public Library (Grant number [IMLS-CCV-2033-03](#)). Quilting has been a popular programming activity in many public libraries for decades. In this project, specialized quilting robotic arms work with patrons to help create new designs which the machines learn by observing the work of humans. The machines can also recognize voice and gesture commands to perform simple tasks with the humans, such as holding one end of a quilt or stitching quilts together.



**Example 2.2. Companion Bacteria**

In this example, the Fulton County Public Library (Atlanta, GA) used connected sensors and advancements in electromagnetic radiology to foster bacterial growth in its compost garden (Grant number [IMLS-CCV-2031-18](#)). Ambient electromagnetic radiation from the library building is channeled into the compost garden. Furthermore, patrons periodically perform electromagnetic symphonies using specialized musical instruments to promote growth of certain kinds of microorganisms depending on the season and the composition of the compost pile. The symphonies are taught as part of the library's music and engineering workshops. Sensors and instruments can also be checked out by patrons.

**3. Spiritual and Mental Conviviality**

This topic calls for proposals around novel and inventive ways to address spiritual and mental needs of community members. Emphasis should be placed on collective practices and rituals that encourage active engagement of the person with her own inner world, as well as the inner worlds of others.

**Example 3.1. BCI Meditation**

The Portland Public Library used brain-computer interface (BCI) devices to create collective meditation programs (Grant number [IMLS-CCV-2031-18](#)). Unlike traditional meditation practices which focus mostly on the individual, BCI meditation provides the practitioner feedback about both her individual and collective state of mind. Various exercises and mini-games help the practitioner focus her attention and even help other members of the group. Haptic and audio-visual feedback sent through the BCI devices, as well the environment, allow the practitioners to sense members of the group who are struggling or need extra support. BCI meditation devices can also be checked out by patrons to participate in meditation sessions remotely.

**Eligibility**

See the Notice of Funding Opportunity for eligibility criteria for this program.

### Program Contacts

If you have questions, we encourage you to contact staff members listed under the topic area that best fits your project.

Convivial Interactions	Conviviality with Non-Humans	Spiritual and Mental Conviviality
Octavia Le Guin Senior Program Officer <a href="mailto:o_leguin@imls.gov">o_leguin@imls.gov</a>	Cory Atwood Senior Program Officer <a href="mailto:c_atwood@imls.gov">c_atwood@imls.gov</a>	Mariam Ibn-Haldoun Senior Program Officer <a href="mailto:m_ibnhaldoun@imls.gov">m_ibnhaldoun@imls.gov</a>

### Webinars and VR Conferences

Webinars and VR conferences for potential applicants will be held on December 10, 2034 and January 15, 2035. Slides and a recordings will be available.

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