

Access Pennsylvania POWER Library Services Chat with a Librarian Reference Staffing Application

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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
333 Market Street
Harrisburg, PA 17126-0333
www.education.pa.gov



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Background

The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Office of Commonwealth Libraries' (OCL) Chat with a Librarian is a component of its POWER Library services.

Chat with a Librarian provides Pennsylvanians with remote reference service support via specially-designed chat software. The service is provided twenty-four hours per day, seven days (24/7) per week.

To provide round-the-clock staffing, libraries in Pennsylvania contribute reference staff hours. The chat software vendor also provides additional librarian support during hard-to-staff hours.

To staff the service, OCL accepts applications from all types of Pennsylvania libraries to contribute reference librarian staff time, a few hours per week.

This document:

- Describes POWER Library's Chat with a Librarian service
- Identifies which types of Pennsylvania libraries may be eligible to contribute staffing to this service; and
- Describes the requirements that staff must meet to provide staff support.

Benefits for Libraries That Contribute Staff Time

Libraries that contribute a few hours of staff time a week receive several benefits. They can:

1. Obtain a full online reference management system along with a customizable e-mail submission form;
2. Obtain a unique online chat interface that captures local reference statistics via coded widgets from their web site;
3. Provide a new online library service cost-effectively;
4. Reach new patrons and improve service for current patrons;
5. Train staff to provide a traditional service using up-to-date methods.

In addition, libraries that contribute a few hours of staff time a week have the satisfaction of knowing that they are helping to provide library service to Pennsylvania residents. Also, libraries that provide a few staff hours to support Chat with a Librarian help to hold down the chat software vendor's charges for additional librarian support.

Technical Support for Chat with a Librarian

OCL competitively selects a technical support vendor and library chat software for the Chat with a Librarian service at regular intervals. Currently, Hosting Solutions and Library Consulting (HSLC), a nonprofit organization located in Philadelphia, PA, provides technical support for POWER Library.

Participation Requirements

Eligibility

Any type of Pennsylvania library is eligible to contribute staff time to the Chat with a Librarian 24/7 reference service.

Contributing staff must have a post-secondary degree in library or information sciences from a program accredited by the American Library Association, or be certified as a librarian in Pennsylvania, or pursuing a post-secondary education program in library or information sciences

Libraries that contribute staff time must have a strong commitment to sharing its staff's reference expertise.

Staff that frequently provide direct public service and/or technical services staff deemed appropriate by the Site Coordinator as able to be effective providing Chat.

Staff that have provided 50 or more Chat sessions on their local queue only, if applicable.

Training:

Attend either in-person or live webinar training provided by HSLC staff
OR

In-person training provided by current MLS Chat staff member (Site Coordinator) at local library (Site Coordinators must be trained by HSLC Staff)

AND

Watch an HSLC provided recorded webinar in best practices and available resources

Final Step:

Take and pass an online quiz

Eligible Library Requirements

Eligible libraries must:

1. **Appoint a staff person to be site coordinator:** Ideally, a site coordinator is responsible for reference staff scheduling and is interested in promoting and integrating new technologies with library services;
2. **Allow staff to attend training:** At least one person must complete the free-of-charge software training. That individual may train additional staff. The initial and refresher trainings may be offered online, or at the library, or regionally in Pennsylvania;
3. **Contribute staff time on a weekly basis:** The number of hours that are contributed will be negotiated by the library site coordinator and the Chat with a Librarian service coordinator. A minimum of three hours per week is required. Scheduling changes due to sickness, leave time, etc. will be accommodated as needed;
4. **Promote service use:** Libraries must provide a link to the service on their website and look for other ways to promote its use; and
5. **Provide funding attribution:** Libraries must list the POWER Library on all printed or electronic presentations of POWER Library Chat with a Librarian resources.

Funding and Support

Access Pennsylvania's POWER Library services are funded primarily by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and through Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services. These funds are administered by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, Office of Commonwealth Libraries.

Disclaimer

OCL reserves the right to change or terminate the Access Pennsylvania POWER Library Chat with a Librarian program based on the availability of funding, program needs, or the availability of vendors that can provide qualified services.

Application

Instructions

Complete the institution information below, along with the agreement information and signature pages for each service selected.

Address any questions about this application form to HSLC at 215-222-1532 or support@hslc.org.

Remit

Submit two original, signed copies of the application and agreement form(s) via First Class Mail to:

HSLC

Attention: POWER Library Applications

3600 Market Street, Suite 550

Philadelphia, PA 19104

**Access Pennsylvania
POWER Library Services Chat
with a Librarian Reference
Staffing Application**

Institution Information

Library Name:

Institution:

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Library Director:

Email:

Number of Professionals on Staff:

Telephone:

Fax:

Enrollment/Population Served (in numbers):

Library Website:

County:

State Representative District:

State Senatorial District:

Site Coordinator Information

Name:

Title:

Library (if different):

Street Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Email:

Telephone (if different):

Fax (if different):

Other info to be added:

Access Pennsylvania POWER Library Chat with a Librarian Reference Staffing Agreement

Enter Institution Name

agrees to:

1. **Appoint a staff person to be site coordinator:** Ideally, a site coordinator is responsible for reference staff scheduling and is interested in promoting and integrating new technologies with library services;
2. **Allow staff to attend training:** At least one person must complete the free-of-charge software training. That individual may train additional staff. The initial and refresher trainings may be offered online, or at the library, or regionally in Pennsylvania;
3. **Contribute staff time on a weekly basis:** The number of hours that are contributed will be negotiated by the library site coordinator and the Chat with a Librarian service coordinator. A minimum of three hours per week is required. Scheduling changes due to sickness, leave time, etc. will be accommodated as needed;
4. **Promote service use:** Provide a link to the service on their website and look for other ways to promote its use; and
5. **Provide funding attribution:** Libraries must list the POWER Library funding attribution statement (as found on the POWER Library site's For Librarians-Funding and Support section on all printed or electronic presentations of POWER Library Chat with a Librarian resources.

This commitment is made for a period of one year and is automatically renewed for one-year terms. The agreement may be terminated at any time by the participating library or the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Office of Commonwealth Libraries. Libraries may not alter this agreement.

Authorized Signature (original in blue ink): _____

Name (Printed)

Title

Date