

**The J. Frank Dobie Library Trust Awards Committee
is accepting applications for 2024 awards
through **December 15, 2023.****

When famed Texas author and folklorist J. Frank Dobie passed away in 1964, he left the majority of his estate to create the J. Frank Dobie Library Trust for the purpose of assisting small Texas libraries in purchasing books. Awards are selected annually by a committee and presented at the opening luncheon of the Texas Library Association annual conference (attendance is not required).

Award Criteria

Mr. Dobie's will specifies that the degree of support a library receives from its community be taken into consideration by the selection committee. Therefore, awards are made on the basis of not only need, but also the extent to which community governments, library boards, friend's organizations, and individuals have promoted and supported the library, in comparison with their potential to do so. The selection committee also takes into consideration the library's support of the community and the library's need of additional book resources.

Eligibility

Application is open to public libraries in Texas who (1) serve a population of 20,000 or less (per the library's annual TSLAC report); (2) are legally established;¹ and (3) are open for service at least twenty hours per week.

Number and Amount of Awards

The total amount available for awards each year is determined by the net income of the trust. The selection committee determines each year both the number and the amount of awards. In 2018, a total of \$46,000 was distributed to five libraries.

Expenditure of Awards

Awarded funds must be used solely for the purchase of books. Books may be purchased in any format, including ebooks and audiobooks.

¹ A legally established public library is one established as a department of a city or county government by charter, resolution, or ordinance; or by contract as provided for in the Interlocal Cooperation Act, Texas Civil Statutes, Article 4413 (32c); or as a nonprofit corporation chartered by the Office of the Secretary of State for the purposes of providing free public library services, and having a current contract with a city, county, or school district to provide free public library services for the city, county, or school district.

No more than 50% of the funds may be used to obtain ebooks, whether that is by transfer of ownership or by license/subscription; the committee strongly encourages purchasing rather than licensing when feasible.

The committee recognizes that many small libraries obtain ebooks through consortia that may provide other services as well. Funds spent on ebooks may include payment for services directly in support of accessing the ebooks, such as platform preparation, but may not be spent for membership costs or services unrelated to obtaining access to ebooks.

The committee intends that the funds be spent within one calendar year of receipt.

Deadline and Timeline

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 15, 2023.

The committee expects to notify all applicants of its decisions by early March 2024.

Awards will be presented at the Opening Awards & Author Session of the Texas Library Association annual conference, on Tuesday, April 26, 2024, at 12:15 - 1:45. We love for recipients to attend so that they can be publicly recognized by their peers, but we understand that many cannot. In those cases, checks will be mailed following the conference.

Application Process

APPLICATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 15, 2023.

To apply, submit the information described below by email to:

Gretchen McCord, gretchen@digitalinfolaw.com

With copy to admin@digitalinfolaw.com

Note: If you do not receive confirmation that your application was received within three business days of sending, please contact Gretchen at the email above or 512.470.8932.

Information to be Included in Application

- Cover sheet containing:
 - Name of Library
 - Contact person
 - City and county
 - Mailing address
 - Email address(es)
 - Telephone number
 - Library's EIN

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- Brief history of the library
- Brief description of the library's service area and communities served, including schedule of the hours the library is open to the public each week
- Description of support the library receives from the community
 - Provide an account of local efforts in support of the library over the most recent one or more years. Statistics provide some evidence of continuing local support of the library, but limited insight into the persistency and intensity of effort that went into their making. Tell how local government, businesses, and citizen groups have contributed to the betterment of the library. Tell of efforts the library staff, board, and friends have made toward the promotion and improvement of library services. **Tell your story!**
- Explanation of how the library meets the needs of different segments of the community
 - For example: programming, bookmobile service, services to nursing homes or day care centers
- Description of any engagement in library cooperation, such as cooperation between the public and school libraries
- Description of how the library uses volunteers (*i.e.*, what your volunteers do)
- If your library has received one or more Dobie awards in the past, briefly describe how the library and the community benefited from the award.
- The kinds of books the library proposes to buy and the reasons for such purchases. There are no restrictions on the kinds of books that may be bought; however, regardless of type, books purchased should be of good quality and lasting value.
- The name and qualifications of the library staff member who would be responsible for book selection and/or the name and qualifications of a consultant outside the library who would be willing to advise the library in its book purchases.

Tips for Your Application

Each year, we are asked for tips for preparing a winning application. It is important to realize that the majority of applications we receive each year come from libraries that are sorely lacking in funding. Selecting Dobie grant recipients is a rewarding experience, but also heartbreaking, because so many Texas libraries are in need. Every year, our decisions are difficult. In other words, not being selected does not necessarily mean your application wasn't well done.

That said, we do want to provide some tips:

- Address the criteria described above.
- Include all of the requested information. If any of the above information is not included in your application packet, the committee may choose to not consider your library for an award.
- **Do not send** any statistics other than those specifically requested above; the committee will pull the most recent TSLAC annual report of each applicant library and consider

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information from the report that it deems relevant, including information about collections, services and programs, funding, and revenue and expenditures.

- Most importantly: ***Tell your story!***