



Zip Books for Rural Libraries FAQ

February 2014

1. What is the “Zip Books for Rural Libraries” project, and why is it being implemented?

“Zip Books for Rural Libraries” (Zip Books) is a statewide LSTA demonstration grant project designed to employ an interlibrary loan service alternative in selected California small or rural libraries. Zip Books is based on the pilot project, “Zip Books—Digital Library of Northern California,” conducted by the Butte, Shasta and Humboldt County Libraries under a FY 2011/12 LSTA grant from the California State Library. The purpose was to identify and test efficient, cost-effective alternatives to traditional interlibrary loan delivery practices.

One method tested was a “buy vs. borrow” model, where used books were ordered through Amazon, rather than requested through interlibrary loan, and shipped directly to patrons in good standing using the free Amazon Prime two-day delivery service whenever possible. Services were tracked and the patrons were responsible for returning the books to the library when finished. The libraries would then decide whether to add the books to their collections, or dispose of them in some other way (library book sale, etc.). The participants in the pilot project reported an overall cost savings of 68% over traditional ILL using this model. Delivery times to patrons took as little as one day, where traditional ILL delivery would take 2 to 6 weeks.

The Zip Books demonstration project will apply this basic model in approximately 30 designated rural libraries statewide. The goals are: 1) to show the feasibility and benefits of this new model of service; 2) to provide an alternative to traditional, expensive library-to-library ILL delivery; 3) to provide faster, less expensive, more flexible “ILL” services; 4) to provide a means for libraries to add to their collections by purchasing materials “on demand”; and 5) to create, possibly, a successful option for future use of California Library Services Act (CLSA) Communication and Delivery Funds.

Zip Books is envisioned as a multi-year project; 2013/14 is the first phase, and the 2014/15 phase is in development.

2. Who manages the project, and what does it entail?

This project is managed by Califa Group (Califa), in partnership with the California State Library. Participation is by invitation only. The project started in September 2013.

Califa has established an Amazon Prime Corporate Credit account for Zip Books. Subaccounts are created for each participating library. Participants have access only to their own libraries’ accounts, and order and ship books using the standard Amazon online interface. There is a suggested expenditure cap of \$35 per item; higher expenditures are considered by Califa on a case-by-case basis.

Califa and the California State Library held a project kickoff meeting on October 3, 2013, and the first 16 participants were expected to roll out service within the following month. We recommended a soft

rollout process, to manage the service more as an ILL alternative rather than to immediately generate new demand. For participants entering the project now, we will have an orientation session sometime in February 2014, and libraries will be expected to rollout their Zip Books service by March 31, 2014. Promotional materials (bookmarks, postcards, logo) are available.

Each participating library is to support the project goals; to provide quarterly statistics throughout the grant period; to adhere to the project's policies, procedures and guidelines as established by Califa; to complete and submit any requested documents, and to attend the orientation, any other online meetings or conference calls that may be scheduled. Libraries will also be asked to survey their patrons and submit the results to Califa and the California State Library (survey instrument to be provided). The library director will be required to sign a form certifying the library's commitment to these points.

3. Will e-books be included in the project?

E-books are not included and we have no plans to do so at this point.

4. Can we order from vendors other than Amazon?

Not at this time. This may be an option in the future.

5. Can we have the materials delivered to our library for cataloging/inventory first?

One of the most attractive things about this model is the speed with which patrons receive service over traditional ILL. Having the materials delivered to your library for cataloging first would take the "zip" out of Zip Books. The policy will be to have the items delivered directly to requesting patrons at the point of ordering. Procedures and guidelines can be put in place to minimize problems that might occur (patrons not returning books, etc.). The pilot project participants did not experience any problems with patrons returning the "zip books" to their libraries.

6. Will we have to do all of our ILL through Zip Books?

No. Obviously there are some things that will be requested that won't be available through Amazon, which participants will have to obtain through traditional ILL processes. There is a guideline as to expected use of participants' Zip Books accounts, and this will be covered at the orientation.

7. How will we handle the issue of tracking purchases and items?

Participating libraries will develop and implement their own procedures for the most part. The pilot project libraries' procedures will be made available, and staff from Shasta County and other libraries will be available for consultation. Guidance on this will be also covered during the orientation.

8. Will there be any restrictions imposed on the type of materials that we can order through this service?

The materials that can be ordered through this service are limited to **books** in tangible formats: print, large-print, and audio. Zip Books is to be used only for titles that your library does not already own.

9. Who are the contacts for this project?

The primary contact for this project is Wayne Walker, Operations Manager for Califa Group. His contact information is:

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The grant monitor for this project at the California State Library is Janet Coles:

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More questions? Contact us!