

Georgia Public Library Service announces grant to Sara Hightower Regional Library System as part of American Rescue Plan Act Funding by the Institute of Museum and Library Services

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Projects proposed by the Sara Hightower Regional Library System (SHRLS) have recently been funded through grants from Georgia Public Library Service with funding from the Institute of Museum and Library services.

(Rome, GA) - Georgia Public Library Service has been awarded \$4,333,653 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding by the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS); \$3,000,000 for direct inclusion projects, \$1,000,000 for ebooks, and \$1,000,000 for technology projects.

To achieve the ARPA purposes with respect to IMLS Grants to States, the grants to libraries were available to all 60 public library systems in Georgia. IMLS has established high priority spending priorities for Georgia's public libraries to respond directly and immediately to the pandemic in the areas of technology and digital inclusion with a focus on education, health, and workforce development; rapid emergency relief so libraries can respond safely to the pandemic; and library services that meet the needs of the community.

The Sara Hightower Regional Library System was awarded three grants in the amount of \$41,318. The funds were used to purchase new ebook titles and for the creation and installation of the new *SHRL TV* streaming television station.

"Despite tremendous challenges, Georgia's public libraries have continued to serve their communities throughout the pandemic," said State Librarian Julie Walker. "They have found creative ways to provide high-speed internet and access to library materials, services, technology, and programs. This new source of funding to safely refresh spaces and equipment, expand programming, enhance collections, and increase services enables us to grow library access for all. Investing in Georgia's public libraries is directly investing in and supporting our communities."

With the allotted funds given to SHRLS, the library system was able to purchase ebooks and eAudio titles that are available through our digital application, OverDrive Libby. Funding was also used to purchase new wireless access points that provide greater WiFi availability inside and outside the branch locations. In addition, The Rome-Floyd County Library is excited to

announce the funds will be used to install new equipment needed for the launch of *SHRL TV*. In addition to original community program segments, *SHRL TV* airs the public meetings of the Rome City Commission, Floyd County Commission, Floyd County Board of Education, and Rome City School Board of Education meetings. With the new equipment and app, *SHRL TV* will air original programming which has the capabilities to reach our entire patron base and beyond. The new equipment will provide streaming service with its new app, to anyone that has access to a Fire, Apple, Roku streaming service and/or device.

“With this pandemic, we have seen many changes in our communities, said Delana Sissel, Director of Sara Hightower Regional Library System. With the ARPA funds we received, we will be able to continue to serve the public with new technologies and help them adapt to these changes. Libraries are always changing to meet the needs of our communities, and as stewards of information, it is imperative that we disseminate the information our patrons need in the most effective way possible. With these funds, we are able to reach everyone in our communities and provide them with services they can use to further their own knowledge and enrich their lives.”

The Sara Hightower Regional Library System serves Chattooga, Floyd, and Polk counties with six public libraries located in Summerville, Trion, Rome, Cave Spring, Rockmart, and Cedartown.

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