Applicant Organization: Benicia Public Library	Amount: $24,850
Proposal Title: LibrarEaze: Empowering Library Users with Reading Disabilities	
Project Goal: Use readily available technology to rethink and repackage how library resources are marketed and made discoverable so they are more accessible to adult nonreaders.	

Describe the problem, need, issue or challenge that your project will address, why your project is innovative, how it could help others or advance knowledge or practice for the field, and its potential to scale as a solution for others.

Libraries across the United States serve hundreds of millions of people every year—most of them readers. Yet, an estimated 40 million U.S. adults have dyslexia, one of the most common forms of reading disability, and 21% of adults in the U.S. are functionally illiterate. This number means more than one in five adults have difficulty navigating written materials in various contexts including work-related documents, medical information, personal correspondence, and leisure reading. The inability to read and access information leads to limited educational opportunities, social isolation, limited civic participation, negative emotional and psychological effects, and more. Libraries across the country, including ours, have adult literacy programs which work tirelessly to assist adults with overcoming reading difficulties. Yet little attention is paid to those who cannot be helped because either these programs are not readily available to them, their disability is too severe, or one of the many other issues that prevent non-readers from becoming readers and library users. These individuals should not be left behind.

With advances in digital delivery of materials including ebooks available with customizable fonts, downloadable audiobooks, music, and video, the world of information that was once exclusive to the reading populace can now be made available to all those who wish to enjoy it…if they are aware of it and can find it! Libraries play a crucial role in providing services and resources to individuals with diverse needs, including nonreaders, but very few of our services are designed with nonreaders in mind. So even though we provide audiobooks, videos, and adaptive technology, gaining access to these services can be daunting and unwelcoming for nonreaders.

This project aims to make the world of libraries accessible to nonreaders by using technology to provide access to the vast array of information, entertainment, and cultural resources already available to readers, so individuals with reading difficulties no longer miss out on opportunities to explore literature, news, music, and other forms of media that enrich and enhance their lives. Using simple, widely available technology, we propose to produce a series of videos as a means of helping nonreaders discover and navigate library resources. Accessible via QR codes and marketed using clear, simplified language, images, and pictographs, these videos will enable independent use of library resources by nonreaders, reducing stress and eliminating stigma. These strategies in and among themselves are not groundbreaking, but our intended use of them to leverage a campaign of inclusivity sets this project apart from other efforts by challenging ourselves to make libraries welcoming, comfortable places for non-readers. These techniques could easily be replicated by other libraries of varying size and type across the country, opening up new opportunities for an estimated 20% of our population to create more inclusive, vibrant communities.

Describe your project plan, including activities, timeframe, resource requirements and, if relevant, collaborators and sustainability plans.

Using visual storytelling, narration, visual cues and symbols to convey information, we will create a collection of short videos designed to support self-directed use of library resources. These videos will be made available on social media and will be accessible online via QR Codes posted in multiple formats and locations both inside and outside the library. This will include traditional in-house forms of marketing such as the use of flyers, labels, and signage, as well as external marketing such as placing visual messages with QR Codes on posters

at bus stops and other local gathering places like churches and schools. Other forms of marketing will include radio spots (both paid and Public Service Announcements) and advertising on Spotify and YouTube to drive nonreaders to the library's website or doors where they can learn more. We will integrate interactive elements into the videos, such as clickable buttons or pop-up text boxes, that provide additional context or explanations to allow nonreaders to engage with the content at their own pace. We will use visual scaffolding to break down complex information into smaller, digestible segments within the videos, using techniques such as step-by-step demonstrations or sequential animations. By making the videos easily accessible and easy to understand, we will promote independent discovery of resources among nonreaders, diminishing the stigma that often accompanies the inability to read.

Activities will include 1) identifying which services to prioritize for marketing to nonreaders, then for each service we will 2) storyboard the process by which those services are accessed to develop a storyline that effectively communicates how to use the resource in an engaging way, 3) write scripts that are concise and focused, and 4) plan visuals to accompany the script. Next steps will be to 5) film and edit the videos including any post-production elements such as adding music, overlay graphics, or simple subtitles and 6) publishing of the videos online and through social media. Finally, 7) QR codes will be generated to be used in-house and with external collateral posted throughout our service area and 8) a separate marketing campaign using radio, Spotify, and YouTube to advertise the availability of the new access points will be launched. Each video will take approximately one month to complete, and we anticipate completing a dozen over the course of the year.

Required resources include: a) staff time which can be achieved by using grant funds to pay for on call staff, releasing regular staff from service duties to work on the project, b) production equipment such as lighting and microphones compatible with the library's existing film equipment, c) video editing software licensing, and d) promotional services. We are also submitting this project for an Institute of Museum and Library Services, Library Services and Technology Act grant through the California State Library. If both grants are funded, we will hire temporary staff to specifically work on the project.

Provide names and titles for the principal investigator(s) and other key participants in the project.
Jennifer Baker, Director of Library and Cultural Services
Amber Kelly, Senior Librarian
Patrice Sartor, Librarian II

BudgetLine	Basis	Cost
Staffing	On call Librarian $35/hr for 12 hours per week for 50 weeks	$21,000
Equipment	Tripod with ring light Steady cam mobile kit for smartphone, Cables to transfer video files to desktop for editing, Wireless Microphone to accompany video capture Microphone for capturing voiceover	$600
Software	Annual license for video editing software	$250
Promotions	Cost of promoting videos on social media, radio, YouTube, and Spotify	$2000
Printing	Cost of printing high quality signage and posters	$1000
Total Budget Request		$24,850