

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council
City Hall
Torrance, California

Members of the Council:

SUBJECT: Community Services/Library Division – Accept and appropriate grant funds in the amount of \$18,411 from the California State Library, and \$6,137 from the Torrance Public Library Foundation to fund the Live Homework Help Program

RECOMMENDATION

The Acting Community Services Director recommends that the City Council accept and appropriate a Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant in the amount of \$18,411 and a donation of \$6,137 from the Torrance Public Library Foundation to fund the online Live Homework Help Program. (FEAP 622)

BACKGROUND

The California State Library has used Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds to assist pre-selected public libraries in launching online homework help services. In August of 2006, the Torrance Public Library received a grant from the State Library for a subscription to Live Homework Help provided by the vendor, Tutor.com. The service inaugurated in September of 2006, and usage statistics and response from students and parents has been overwhelmingly positive, with over 2,000 students using the service since its inception.

The State Library homework help program is designed as a three-year descending grant with participating libraries picking up a larger share of the cost in successive years. FY 2007-2008 is the Torrance Public Library's second year in the grant program; this requires the State Library pay 75% of the cost and the Library provide 25% of the cost. The Torrance Public Library Foundation has generously approved funding the Library's portion of the program (\$6,137). In FY 2008-2009, the State Library will fund 50% of the cost (approximately \$12,274), and the Library will be responsible for 50%, and thereafter the Torrance Public Library will need to identify a funding source for this service to continue.

ANALYSIS

While the Torrance Public Library and the Torrance Unified School District (TUSD) provide remedial after-school support and in-person homework help, these programs are available only at school or library sites and are limited by a variety of factors including restrictions on eligibility, physical space, and the availability and skills of volunteers. The desire to provide high quality homework assistance due to demand from parents and students caused the Library to seek out the Live Homework Help service. It has proved invaluable, and activity reports indicate high use in the areas of high school sciences, mathematics, and writing skills. A majority of usage is remote, with students logging on

from personal computers at home or outside a City of Torrance facility, indicating Live Homework Help is complementary to our in-library services, and is reaching a student population formerly without homework assistance.

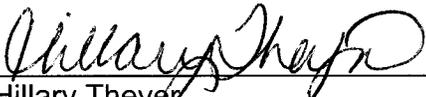
Any student with a Torrance Public Library card can use the service both remotely, through a PC or Macintosh computer, or from any Torrance Public Library computer. Live Homework Help is available from 1:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. seven days per week, and live tutors are available for grades 4 through college introductory level in science, math, social studies, English, and writing. Tutors provided by Tutor.com are certified teachers, college professors, graduate school students, and undergraduates from top universities. Every tutor undergoes rigorous training and evaluation, as well as security screening. Library staff, parents, and students have been very pleased with the service and the quality of assistance; as noted, evaluations submitted by student users have been extremely positive.

The cost of Live Homework Help service is based on the service area population, with the total cost for the FY 2007-2008 Torrance Public Library program assessed at \$24,548. The State Library grant will fund 75% (\$18,411), and the Torrance Public Library Foundation will fund 25% (\$6,137).

In fulfilling the Torrance Public Library's mission to serve as curriculum and academic support for students, this service has proven valuable and to contribute to increased student access to homework assistance resources, and academic success. The Library looks forward to continuing the service.

Respectfully submitted,

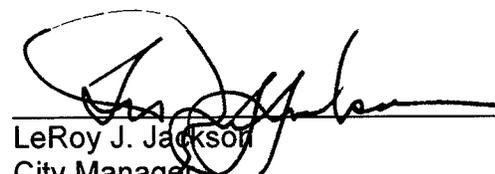
NORM REEDER
ACTING COMMUNITY SERVICES DIRECTOR

By 
Hillary Theyer
Principal Librarian

CONCUR:


Paula J. Weimer
City Librarian


Norm Reeder
Acting Community Services Director


LeRoy J. Jackson
City Manager

Attachment: A. California State Library memorandum from January 4, 2007



TO: Paula Weiner, City Librarian
Torrance Public Library

FROM: Cindy Mediavilla, Library Programs Consultant
California State Library

SUBJECT: Live Homework Help Program, 2007/08

DATE: January 4, 2007

We are pleased to extend the opportunity for your library to continue participating in the Live Homework Help program in 2007/08. Forty-six jurisdictions currently participate in the program thanks in large part to the cost-sharing efforts of the participating libraries. As a result, Live Homework Help is more popular than ever with students throughout California. We hope that you will agree to continue this service in your community.

In the past, we agreed to support remote access costs only. Because Tutor.com no longer separates its subscription fee by type of access, Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) monies will be used in 2007/08 to support 75% of your library's entire Live Homework Help subscription cost, including both remote and in-library access. Your library will be expected to pay the remaining costs (i.e., 25% of the entire subscription fee). Should you decide to continue in the program beyond this coming year, then your library will be expected to pay 50% of the entire cost of Live Homework Help in 2008/09 and 100% of the cost in 2009/10. As always, these figures may change depending upon the availability of LSTA funds.

The current cost of providing Live Homework Help to your library's users is \$24,548. In 2007/08, this cost will be shared as follows:

LSTA (75%)	\$18,411
Torrance Public Library (25%)	\$6,137
TOTAL	\$24,548

Thank you for establishing a business relationship with Tutor.com this past year. Please confirm the library's commitment to sharing the cost of Live Homework Help this

coming year. If the library chooses not to participate in the 2007/08 program, then please check the "No" boxes as appropriate. Libraries will not be paid for indirect costs incurred in administering this program.

Participant libraries will be required to submit two brief narrative reports in 2007/08: a six-month progress report and a final report at the end of the grant year. These reports should include marketing/promotion updates, user comments, and any other data that indicate use or non-use of the program. Report forms will be available on the State Library's website at <http://www.library.ca.gov/html/LHH.cfm>.

Please complete the attached form and fax it to Mark Webster at 916/653-8443 by March 2, 2007. If you have any questions about the Live Homework Help program or the procurement options outlined above, please contact me at 310/915-8588 or cmediavilla@library.ca.gov.