Winning Grants for Rural Libraries

Scenario Discussion Activity

Work in groups of 2–3. Choose the fictional scenario that feels most useful for your group.

☐ A. Rural Teens & Belonging	☐ B. Older Adults & Isolation	☐ C. Early Literacy & Families
A small rural library serves teens across a large geographic area. Transportation is limited, especially in winter. Teens report boredom and few safe places to gather.	The library serves an aging rural population. Many older adults live alone with limited transportation. Staff hear that they want more connection, learning opportunities, and support.	The library serves families with young children across a rural county. Many caregivers work long hours, and some are not regular library users.

1. Who is most affected? *Be as specific as you can.*

2. What problem, challenge, or gap are they experiencing? *Focus on people, not things.*

3. Why does this matter? *What happens if the need is not addressed?*

4. What could the library realistically do in response? *Keep the project manageable.*

Now test the project idea. Keep the evaluation manageable for a small library.

DO List 2–4 activities, services, or actions.

CHANGE What should improve or be different for the people served?

SHOW What simple evidence could show whether that change happened?

Quick reality check

- Is the project realistic with current staff and resources?
- Does the project clearly respond to the need?
- Could the library collect this evidence without creating too much work?

One sentence summary

Our library wants to _____ for _____ because _____. We will do this by _____ so that _____.

Strong grants start with real community needs. Focus on people.