



Ask a Librarian Participation Agreement

October 1, 2026 - September 30, 2027

Contact Information

Library Name : _____

Admin Name : _____

Admin Email: _____

Please identify a Site Coordinator. This person will be our main point of contact at your library. All site coordinators will be trained on the administrative aspects of the service and software and will work with Ask a Librarian staff to customize the Ask a Librarian experience for use at your library.

Site Coordinator Name: _____

Site Coordinator Email: _____

About Ask a Librarian Participation

Tampa Bay Library Consortium, Inc. uses a combination of Springshare's LibAnswers platform as well as some local web resources to maintain the infrastructure of this live, online reference service.

Historically, Ask a Librarian has been funded by Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) federal grant funding, distributed by the State of Florida Division of Library and Information Services. Without those funds in place, we can no longer offer this as a free service for libraries throughout the state.

To continue operations and keep live reference services accessible and as cost-effective as possible, Tampa Bay Library Consortium, Inc. has pivoted to a cost-share model for participation.

Use of this live, virtual reference service will now be segmented into various access levels. Please indicate your desired level of access to Ask a Librarian by selecting the features in the next section of this agreement.

Access to Services

Select all that apply:

- ☐ **Local use of email only:** An email queue can be used to receive and answer email questions directly from your patrons through online forms or custom email addresses. Springshare's LibAnswers platform uses a ticketing system to organize and reply to these email questions.
- ☐ **Local use of email and Chat:** Live Chat departments can be associated with an email queue to allow your library staff to answer questions directly from your library patrons. Chat widgets and even chatbots can be customized for your library's homegrown needs. There is no required scheduling of local chat. Local Email access is required for Local Chat access.
- ☐ **SMS add on:** SMS, or text messaging, capabilities can be added to either the local email or both local email and chat use. SMS questions can be answered via the email ticket dashboard or live, through the chat dashboard. Each library opting in to SMS use will have their own SMS number assigned to receive questions directly to you from your patrons. Local Email use is required for minimum access of SMS. This feature is calculated at an additional cost per Springshare's billing methods.
- ☐ **Collaborative Desk use:** Collaborative chat desks (Statewide for public libraries and Academic for academic libraries) are available for statewide coverage support of chat questions from 10am to 5pm ET Monday through Friday. Tampa Bay Library Consortium, Inc. hires contracted staff to answer "after-hours" questions when libraries are normally closed in the evenings, from 5pm to 10pm ET Monday through Thursday, and 10am-5pm Saturday and Sunday. To support each other's chat services, anyone utilizing the collaborative desk coverage is asked to contribute at least 3 hours a week (per library) answering Statewide or Academic chat questions.

Invoicing

An invoice will be prepared by Tampa Bay Library Consortium, Inc. based on your level of access requested. This invoice cost may be covered in part or whole by a partnering organization. View the current rates and partnerships here: tblc.org/ask-a-librarian-fee-structure/

Annual costs are subject to increases or decreases depending on platform costs and participation numbers, determining cost-share distributions. We're happy to negotiate your agreement and any incurring costs at any time during this agreement period. Please do not hesitate to ask.

Signature

Upon agreement with the above statements and access level requests, please return this signed agreement to:

Tampa Bay Library Consortium, Inc.
Kelly Doty, Senior Manager of Program and Services
Kelly@TBLC.org

Signature of Library Representative: _____

Date of Signature: _____