

Executive Summary

From 1998-2001, the Washington State Library used LSTA funds to improve library services statewide by implementing a large number of projects aimed at educating and training library staff in the areas of technology, services, and management; providing and increasing Internet access; coordinating consortial licensing of online resources; digitizing manuscript and image collections; providing consulting and staff support (especially for small and rural libraries); and encouraging interagency collaboration across all areas of library service.

- When combining the total amount of both participant contributions and LSTA funds used to support Statewide Database Licensing (SDL), total savings resulting from consortial purchasing is approximately three and a half times the total cost of the project. Since the total cost was partially subsidized by LSTA funds, participating libraries actually saved almost five times the amount they contributed to the project.
- LSTA funding has a positive impact in terms of enabling libraries to augment bandwidth and to add public access Internet terminals above and beyond the normal rates of growth. In 2000, the ratio of public Internet access stations per capita in public libraries alone reached 1 terminal for every 2,600 citizens, far exceeding the stated goal of 1 terminal for every 15,000 citizens. This project also succeeded in increasing the geographic coverage of libraries offering internet access, although not all county libraries elected to participate in the project.
- In addition to SDL subsidies and Connectivity grants, LSTA funds also support consulting services in information technology to libraries that lack local expertise.
- Libraries of all sizes have benefited from general consulting in the areas of library administration, management, governance, and library practice.
- The digitization of historical materials has enabled libraries to provide access to collections outside their local service populations, and provides users with seamless access to collections across institutions.
- Both continuing education grants to individuals and the sponsorship of statewide training programs have given both professional and technical staff opportunities to improve skills and expertise in the areas of information technology and management.

Funding priorities for LSTA projects have been identified by the Library Council of Washington, an advisory and oversight body composed of representatives from all types of libraries in the state, the Washington State Library, and the Information School of the University of Washington. A Council representative has served on the advisory committee for each project, often serving as the chair of that committee.