

GATHERING IDEAS 2009
09-GI-001

Project Name: Online Information Portal of Library Resources

Library, group, or person submitting proposal Kristie Kirkpatrick

Library Name, if different Whitman County Rural Library

1. Briefly describe your idea for the use of LSTA funding (limit your response to approximately ½ page):

Because of inconsistent library funding in the state of Washington, residents do not receive equal access to information and library service. I am proposing the libraries of Washington, perhaps led by the Washington State Library create an online information portal of library resources to advance library service collectively for every resident in Washington State. This portal would meet many of the library council's priorities, including increased access for the people of Washington, especially for residents served by poorer library districts and for those with no library service at all.

Key to this portal is that it contains actual products and resources of value to citizens and libraries. I envision this portal containing links to a quality collection of paid databases, downloadable audio books, virtual reference service, the Washington State Library catalog and links to all the libraries in our state, public, school and academic.

Eventually, this site could also serve as the portal to any digitized projects, statewide collaborative programs and the proposed statewide catalog. Having this portal in place would increase the likelihood of resource sharing among Washington's libraries. Most other states have portals of this sort meaning best practices could be easily replicated.

Besides libraries linking to and using this portal, a major benefit is provided to the underserved resident and those without library service. These individuals could link directly. In essence, the portal would give them a library they could use. In this way, statewide benefit is provided to all residents of Washington and all receive a share of LSTA funding, not just those with a library district, or those whose libraries take the time to participate in LSTA funded projects.

2. Briefly describe why funding of this idea is important to the Washington library community (limit your response to approximately ½ page):

Funding of an online information portal is important because it benefits every library district and every citizen in our state while equalizing information access. Wealthier libraries can use money saved from not having to purchase database and audio products to fund the programs and services for which they would normally seek outside funding (sometimes LSTA) to afford. Poorer libraries and their customers would have access to resources that previously were not affordable or available to them, thus equalizing access.

Secondly, an online information portal is important to the library community because it actually creates a place where all libraries come together – an online community. Every resident of Washington State and every library district could be served by this portal. Collaborative library projects, resource sharing and more could take place from this site. The site would also be an attractive collaborative marketing tool for Washington's libraries.

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3. Briefly describe the outcome that is expected should the idea be funded. In other words, how will we know if the project has been successful and has achieved its goals? (limit your response to approximately ½ page):

The outcome of funding an online information portal is that all residents of Washington State could expect at least a basic level of library service as related to databases, downloadable audio books, virtual reference, digital collections, and more. In addition, the helpful collection of links to Washington Libraries would connect users to book collections from the Washington State Library and in some cases, to other libraries who might be willing to lend for free.

Another important outcome is that this portal would bring Washington State in line with other states already possessing library portals of important database information. This portal would position Washington State to move forward as libraries statewide and nationally strive to meet the changes of the technology revolution and the changing user.

Statistics of use and success of the portal could be easily measured and surveys could be incorporated into the site. Local libraries could track use statistics of their own patrons accessing the portal for local reporting as well as LSTA reporting for this project.

General Information

Which library types are intended as the primary beneficiaries of this project? (check all that apply)

- Academic (private and public two-year and four-year academic institutions)
 Public (libraries organized under RCW 27.12)
 School (private and public K-12 schools)
 Special (business and industry, law, medical, other government, tribal, other)
If other, specify: tribal or any others benefiting from a basic suite of services

The intended beneficiaries of the project? (check the primary beneficiary)

- Library staff
 Library users or potential library users
 A specific group of staff or users, or a potential user group. Name the target beneficiaries(s): ALL!
(e.g., children, adults, disadvantaged, remote access library users, unserved community members, reference staff, IT staff, students)

The activities needed to implement this project are envisioned to include (check all that apply):

- User training
 Staff training
 Grants
 Development of best practices
 Demonstration of emerging technology or practices
 Other, please explain:

Best practices could be gathered from other states and replicated.

Considering the outcome desired, how long should the project continue? Indefinitely
(Note that most projects are from one year to four years in length.)

Which Library Council priorities support the idea you are submitting (check all that apply)

- Increase information access for the people of Washington
 Advance literacy in the state of Washington
 Demonstrate how libraries educate, empower and elevate people, communities, and democratic society by providing free and equitable access to all types of information.
 Serve underserved, unserved, and culturally diverse communities and populations
 Enhance the skills and knowledge of library staff Employees of many small libraries have never used many of the databases or services that would be available. Skills and knowledge would improve through availability and use
 Preserve library collections – This project would make them easily located by all residents.