



Library Development

New York State Receives Continued Funding Through Gates Foundation "Staying Connected" Grant Program

The New York State Library has received \$294,000 in matching "Staying Connected" Grant Program funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation on behalf of the state's public library systems and public libraries.

The \$294,000 grant, representing Phase Two of the "Staying Connected" Program, will enable New York's 23 public library systems to enhance and expand technology training for public library staff members who assist with public-access computing. Those receiving grant funds must match 50 percent of the amount received and implement the components of the grant proposal within two years.

In 2003, the State Library applied for and received \$222,640 from the foundation in Phase One of the "Staying Connected" Program: \$137,440 to support technology training for public library staff and \$85,200 to fund replacement or upgrading of public-access computers in three urban library systems.

What is the Gates "Staying Connected" Grant Program?

The two-phase "Staying Connected" Grant Program represents the final component of the Gates Library Initiative. The program goal is sustainability of public-access computing in public libraries. Grants are designed to strengthen the state library agency's position in promoting ongoing support for public-access computing. After extensive discussions of system needs with public library system leaders, New York State applied for funding in the Training Support category this year.

To help fill both the universal and the specific needs for training statewide, the activities funded through Phase Two of the program will include both statewide and regional components:

Statewide Components

- **NY LibraryTrain**, which will include three parts:
 1. Training web site with links to available online training components developed by library systems, libraries,

and appropriate online communities, providing a convenient means for statewide sharing of training materials created to fill specific needs.

2. NOVEL Pro, consisting of new online materials specifically designed to provide training in the use of NOVEL (New York Online Virtual Electronic Library), including an overview of NOVEL and its benefits as well as training in the use of individual databases and resources. It will include the most successful NOVEL training projects developed in the LSTA-funded 2004 Invitational Grant Program.
 3. Training Syllabus that will incorporate a continuum of library technology training with three tiers-Basic, Beyond Basic, and Advanced-and provide an invaluable benchmarking tool for library systems and library directors in determining skill levels and training needs.
- *Outcome-Based Evaluation Training*: Expansion of the State Library's ten-phase training plan to provide library system and library staff with the tools and techniques needed to develop and deliver effective training programs based on specific and measurable outcomes, e.g., programs for sustaining public-access computing in public libraries.

Regional Component

Training in technology skills, which will include a needs assessment by the library systems of the training levels and training needs of staff in their member libraries, establishment of target percentages for improvement to higher skill levels, and expansion of ongoing training to meet specific needs.

What is the Gates Library Initiative?

The Gates Library Initiative began in New York State with the submission of a State Partnership Grant Initiative application in October 1998. That initiative brought \$16.6 million in computers and software to New York's public libraries and branches to make computer and Internet technology more available to those who have no other means of access. Through the State Partnership Grant and the Accelerated Grant Program, the Gates Foundation provided funding to public libraries and branches serving communities with a poverty level of 10 percent or more, as determined by a formula established by Gates. Libraries in communities with a poverty level below 10 percent also received some support through the partial building grant program. The Gates U.S. Training Program brought \$257,700 to provide technology training for public library staff.

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