

Opportunity Online Broadband Pilot Grant Program

Final Grant Report Narrative

from the

New York State Library

**Grant Award # OPPLi009
February 2009 through December 31, 2011**

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Summary

The New York State Library, under the auspices of the New York Education Department, applied for (in 2009) and received \$920,697 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation as a participant in the Foundation's two-year Opportunity Online Broadband Grant Program. The purpose of the funds was to enhance public access computing in public libraries through increased broadband connectivity speeds. The funds were used to upgrade the connectivity speeds of 65 small, mainly rural libraries in New York State to a minimum of 1.5 Mbps. The grant funds were divided into four funding categories: 1) \$432,778 was received for the purpose of Bridge Grants so the 65 libraries could pay for the increased monthly broadband connectivity costs with their 50% match contribution. 2) \$182,000 was received for Technical Support funds that were paid out to 10 of the 23 public library systems—systems that had member libraries participating in the grant program. Such funds were used for technical support, training, and other activities that supported the libraries' ability to upgrade their connectivity. 3) \$118,000 was received for E-rate training and support. 4) \$187,919 was awarded to the State Library as Administrative Funds.

The State Library considers this grant project a successful one, with all 65 participating public libraries upgrading to the 1.5 Mbps minimum and continuing their project participation, completing their match obligations, and maintaining their upgrades for both project years. By the end of the project's first year, more than 50% of the libraries had upgraded beyond the minimum speed, contributing to the encouraging 2010 data result (from public library annual reports) that the percent of 1,074 public library outlets in New York State with connection speeds of 1.5 Mbps dropped from 11.2% to 6.3%. This success was achieved despite funding cuts to state library aid in both 2010 and 2011, staff reductions at the State Library in 2010 due to a statewide budget deficit, and the uncertainty of how a 2% Tax Cap will affect libraries in 2012.

Project staff at the State Library has been working with the 65 participating libraries regarding project sustainability and all libraries, as of January 2012, have indicated they intend to maintain their connectivity speeds and now consider adequate broadband speed as necessary and integral to library services and their buildings as lighting, heat and water.

IMPLIMENTATION SUCCESSES

The State Library considers the greatest success of this grant project to be that all 65 participating libraries maintained their grant participation for both grant funding years. This meant these libraries raised their match funds from local funds (often through the formation of community partnerships) for both years, became educated along with their Library Boards in broadband terminology and related issues, and worked with their library systems and local broadband providers to upgrade their connectivity speeds. Many increased their speeds beyond the 1.5 Mbps minimum and added wireless capability and many libraries, by the end of the grant project, indicated their desire for higher broadband connectivity speeds. Making these upgrades in small, rural libraries during the existence of a statewide budget deficit and repeated cuts in state library aid is a significant achievement.

The State Library considers another great success of this grant project to be the opportunities that were provided for the formation of partnerships, both at the state and local level. The Broadband Summit held in June 2009 provided an opportunity for libraries to attend with their local community leaders and thus raise the awareness of the need for quality broadband services in their local communities. The formation of the Broadband Advisory Group (see member listing at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/gateslib/broadbnd/advisory.htm>) brought together people from various state agencies and other statewide organizations and created beneficial partnerships for the State Library. One of the outcomes of these newly-formed partnerships is that the State Library is currently collaborating in the second phase of the federal stimulus-funded statewide mapping project in which libraries have been recognized as important anchor institutions. The State Library knew that the opportunity to form partnerships and collaborations can be a lengthy process and can occur in unlikely places, as well as at organized events, and staff time needs to be flexible so partnership opportunities can be nurtured for the benefit all New York's libraries. This Gates Foundation grant opportunity provided another effective way to form additional partnerships involving statewide broadband issues that will continue to exist after the grant period.

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

Despite experiencing multiple successes as part of this grant project, there is still much to be done in New York State to provide adequate broadband access to all New York's public libraries. 1) Broadband costs vary greatly (there's no statewide price regulations) depending on location and geography challenges, making it expensive for libraries to upgrade their connectivity speeds. Many of the libraries participating in this grant did not have a choice of broadband providers and that lack of price competition ultimately raised their broadband costs. 2) State aid for libraries in New York continues to be reduced, while other costs such as staffing and utilities continue to rise. The majority of New York's libraries depend on local funding and there is increased competition for local dollars. For libraries with reduced staffing, forming multiple local partnerships is a challenging critical activity. 3) There is still no statewide broadband network that is accessible to New York's public libraries. Libraries have not been successful in partnering with the NTIA stimulus-funded infrastructure projects in New York to improve their broadband connections due to geographic challenges and prohibitive "Last Mile" costs.

STRATEGIC LESSONS LEARNED

The broadband grant project was challenging in respect to the political and local issues surrounding broadband upgrades, in addition to the fact that the topic of broadband: a) what it is; b) why it is valuable and necessary for library services and c) what do all the technical terms mean—made it confusing for the participating libraries. These small libraries were often open part-time, managed by part-time "Library Managers" (instead of certified librarians) and governed by Library Boards that were not educated regarding 21st century library services. The project was also further complicated due to a statewide budget deficit in the midst of a national recession. Therefore, finding and spending additional technology funds proved very difficult for these small libraries.

State Library staff found that Best Practices for managing this grant project mainly involved quality and frequent communication with the 65 individual libraries, in addition to the 10 public library systems. The systems were often negotiating connectivity fees and installing equipment for these libraries and answering the many questions these libraries had regarding technical issues. Both State Library staff and system staff met with the libraries' Board members to educate them on broadband issues and assist them with financial decisions. Best Practices also included multiple E-rate training sessions, in group settings and one-on-one assistance, and educating and urging these libraries in the value and the techniques for developing community partnerships.

The State Library has used this Best Practice involving frequent communication combined with education in previous grant programs and plans to continue this successful strategy in future grant initiatives.

EVALUATION

Since the overarching project goal was to upgrade public libraries to a minimum of 1.5 Mbps, the State Library decided that project staff would collect the required data. Therefore, the costs for a formal evaluation by an outside evaluator were not included in the project's application budget proposal. State Library project staff, in conjunction with staff from the 10 participating public library systems, gathered all required reporting data and State Library staff completed all Foundation-required reporting charts and narrative reports. The State Library felt this approach provided more available grant funding for technical assistance, training and E-rate support. The collected data indicated that the project was very successful, with all participating libraries maintaining their participation and meeting all match requirements for both project years, in addition to upgrading and having many libraries exceed the required minimum broadband speed level. All participating libraries also completed the required Public Library Funding and Technology Access Survey according to established deadlines.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

The New York State Library retains all rights to all materials developed under the auspices of this project. No patent applications or copyright registrations have been filed for this project.

ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Although the State Library experienced significant staff reductions due to retirements and layoffs in 2010 and public library systems statewide experienced cuts to their state aid funds, the program administration described in the original grant application did not change due to the priority placed on this grant project. Ms. Todd retained her position as grant administrator, working in conjunction with another State Library staff member, Ms. Stiefvater, who was responsible for the project's E-rate assistance and support. Both people worked with the 10 public library systems and the 65 public libraries participating in the project. One challenge that remained constant (which was indicated in the 2010 Interim Report) was the absence of a State Librarian due to a prolonged illness. However, the Office of Cultural Education's Deputy

Commissioner took on the role of Acting State Librarian and provided support and assistance to the project as needed.

BUDGET NARRATIVE

Grant funds were spent appropriately and there were no variances requested during the grant activity period. As indicated in the attached data chart, the grant funding total was adjusted in Year Two to reflect the five libraries (adjusting the participating library total to 65) that dropped out for various reasons (as reported in the 2010 Interim Report) at the beginning of the project, after Year One funds had already been awarded.

SUSTAINABILITY

Project sustainability was sought both at both the state level and at the local level. At the state level, progress was made for many of the activities indicated in the Statewide Broadband Plan for New York's libraries (see Appendix B), developed in 2010 by the Broadband Advisory Group as a component of this grant project. A listing of the Plan's activities and progress is indicated within the Plan document in Appendix B.

State Library project staff worked with the participating libraries to help these libraries develop broadband sustainability plans. The majority of grant participants added a broadband line item to their annual budgets or revised their existing technology budgets to include ongoing broadband costs. This is a significant achievement because these libraries are very small rural facilities governed by Library Boards that had not previously recognized the value of broadband. It also indicates that broadband costs are being recognized as having equal importance to "utilities" (light, heat, water, etc.) and are essential to providing quality public services.

Forty-four participating libraries achieved additional upgrades in Year Two (see chart in Appendix C). Many of these upgrades were not speed increases (often because they are located in areas where such increases are not available) but equipment improvements that will develop their local broadband infrastructure, maximize efficient use of available bandwidth and sustain increased broadband speeds as they become available.

REPORTS/PUBLICATIONS

There have been no formalized reports or publications associated with this grant project released or published to date. However, all appropriate data charts and the Foundation-approved final report will be posted on the State Library's website at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/gateslib/broadbnd/>. The data and reporting information will be shared with the State Library's key partners, such as the Governor's Office for Technology (OFT) and the Broadband Advisory Group and such data, as appropriate, will be used in future grant applications and statewide initiatives to show the increased capacity of New York's public libraries to supply e-services to the general public.

FOUNDATION RELATIONSHIP

The New York State Library highly values its partnership with the Gates Foundation and has enthusiastically participated in every available grant initiative since the late 1990's. The State Library has always found communication with Foundation grant liaisons to be timely and responsive to problems and questions that arise as the grant project moves forward.

The Broadband grant project was unique and challenging because the Foundation's grant project liaison changed at the end of the first year and the grant activity period for Year One was shorter than Year Two. However, due to excellent communication on the part of the Foundation, these challenges were met.

SUCCESS STORIES

There were many success stories connected with this grant project, both large and small. One in particular concerns the Paine Memorial Free Library, which is a very small rural library located near Lake Champlain (northeast corner of New York next to Vermont) in the town of Willsboro. The town is about 30 miles south of Plattsburgh and its population is around 2,000. There was only "one game in town" when it came to broadband providers and even though the CEO of the provider was on the library's Board, the monthly expense for adequate broadband was too costly for this small library's budget.

One of the State Library's project goals was to educate library staff about the benefits of E-rate. Paine Library had sporadically applied for basic E-rate discounts because of popular misconceptions concerning the difficulty in filing an application and also because of filtering issues. A State Library staff member working with this grant project made multiple trips to this library, met with Board members and the Library Director, and convinced them to file a more robust E-rate application. With the confidence of secured E-rate funding, the library upgraded their connectivity to 1.5 Mbps (see data chart) and plans to sustain their higher speed level once the grant project period ends. The library reported at the end of Year Two that they still did not have adequate connectivity speed to meet the demand.

Another success story illustrates how a small, rural public library can successfully leverage grant funds. The Cairo Public Library, located in the town of Cairo, is a small town (pop. 6,600) in the Catskills area of New York and is located in a section of the town's municipal building. The library participated in multiple Gates Foundation initiatives, beginning with the Rural Sustainability grant program, during which the library developed an action plan to develop community partnerships. The next Foundation initiative in which the library participated was the Foundation's Opportunity Online Hardware grant program. Being small and rural, with a high local poverty rate, the library qualified for seven computers. The library did not have adequate wiring capacity or broadband connectivity to utilize all those computers, so they piled the computer boxes on tables and invited their Library Board to an open house event. With the funding received from the Foundation's broadband grant, the library was able to upgrade to 7 Mbps in Year One and convinced their Board and town officials that the library had the need and the capacity to utilize a new, state of the art, library building. A new library building is currently under construction and will be operational in 2012.

Increased broadband speed had a profound effect on the services delivered at another small rural library, Patterson Library in Westfield. Broadband made it possible to form a partnership with the local Office of the Aging to provide Generations Online computer training to seniors in this community. This training reached dozens of seniors who are now confident in using email, Skype, and other online communication tools and who are able to access government services online. Due to demand from Generations Online graduates, Patterson Library now offers a video conferencing room so that anyone in the community can “Skype” with friends and family around the world. This is a service the library could not have provided before the funding and technical support of the Gates Broadband Grant.

Patterson Library has also been able to reach an entirely new audience by taking advantage of increased broadband to hold online gaming tournaments for children. The library now has a regular group of online gamers who visit the library after school and hold periodic tournaments. They build their own worlds in cyberspace, mixing creativity and physics while learning the rewards of building skills and working toward goals.

The Fayetteville Public Library was not a direct broadband grant recipient, but library staff attended all workshops and other training activities offered through the grant, as their library system had multiple member libraries involved in the grant project. The grant-funded continuing education opportunities helped the library realize the possibilities of using their broadband to offer unique technology services. The library created a FAB Lab, which gives community members the opportunity to “make” things through the sharing of technology knowledge and skills. More information on the FAB Lab can be seen at:
<http://www.fayettevillefreelibrary.org/about-us/services/fablab>

The overarching success of this project is how the State Library’s participation positioned the library to be a successful applicant in Round 1 of NTIA BTOP funding. The State Library illustrated in its BTOP application how their participation in multiple Gates-funded initiatives, such as the Opportunity Online Hardware Grant and the Opportunity Online Broadband Grant, which included a statewide Broadband Summit, gave New York libraries the capacity to extend their technology services to meet BTOP requirements and illustrated how the State Library’s PCC project would be successful. All PCCs in the NY BTOP grant project—***Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary***—are former Gates initiatives recipients. Information about ***Broadbandexpress@yourlibrary*** is found at:
<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/nybbexpress/index.html>

APPENDIX A

Progress Concerning Outcomes and Milestones as Indicated in the New York State Library's Grant Proposal

1) 100% of participating libraries upgrade their broadband speed to a minimum of 1.5 Mbps

This activity was accomplished, with many libraries upgrading to more than the minimum speed (see attached data chart). Year Two saw more libraries accomplish further upgrades and also add infrastructure capacity, such as wireless capability (see Year Two upgrade chart in Appendix C). The majority of participating libraries are now routinely budgeting for connectivity with the goal of regular assessment of bandwidth adequacy during their annual budget planning process. These library upgrades also improve the overall picture of broadband connectivity for New York's libraries. The 2010 public library annual report data indicates that the percent of public libraries (1074 outlets) with connection speeds of less than 1.5 Mbps dropped from 11.2% to 6.3% and the percentage of libraries with connection speeds of greater than 10 Mbps grew from 14.4% to 20.1%, with five libraries reporting they have 100 Mbps fiber connections.

2) 100% of participating libraries participate in both years of the grant program

This activity was accomplished.

3) Further strengthen the State Library's partnership with the state's public library systems

State Library staff worked closely with the 10 public library systems that had member libraries among those 65 libraries participating in the grant. Grant funds for technology training and assistance as well as a portion of the E-rate support funds were awarded to these systems in proportion to the number of participating libraries that were system

members. New York public library systems often negotiate and/or provide broadband access for their members as well as purchasing equipment and providing technical assistance (installing routers, etc.). Many participating libraries have made more conscious decisions about on-going technical support and have decided to contract with their library systems for such services, making the annual cost for that service a part of their budgets.

4) Strengthen and support participating library efforts to form local community partnerships to expand and sustain broadband services

All participating libraries attended the 2009 Broadband Summit accompanied by at least one local community leader. The majority of the participating libraries have developed broadband sustainability plans that include creating a budget line item for technology costs and a commitment to developing community partnerships.

5) Bridge funds were spent appropriately and effectively

100% of participating libraries spent the Bridge funds to pay for 50% of their monthly upgrade costs, using their local match to cover remaining costs as shown in the attached data chart.

6) Broadband upgrades are reported as part of the Public Library Funding & Technology Access Survey

100% of the participating libraries completed the Survey by established deadlines as verified by Survey polling results.

7) Technical support funds were spent appropriately and effectively

Technical support funds were awarded to the 10 participating public library systems that had member libraries participating in the grant in proportion to the number of members involved in the project. Awarded funds were monitored by State Library staff and systems were required to report as to how the funds were spent.

Funds were spent on the following activities: technology project administration, technology training (including wireless management software training), network configuration, equipment costs that were part of one-time upfront connection costs such as routers, switches, and servers, wiring costs, travel to participating libraries, and educating Board

members, library staff, and library trustees about broadband issues, particularly sustainability.

8) E-rate support funds were spent appropriately and effectively

A small portion of the funds was allocated to the 10 participating library systems as support funds, as many systems file E-rate applications for their member libraries and sponsor E-rate training sessions. The remaining funds were used by the State Library in the following way:

- a. A staff person was hired whose primary role was to work with the State Library's E-rate Coordinator in assisting grant-eligible libraries currently not applying for E-rate to complete E-rate applications.
- b. An E-rate workshop was held at the 2010 New York Library Association annual conference at which Linda Schatz presented a program entitled "Myth Busters", which explained how E-rate discounts could be an important component of a library's technology sustainability plan. 25 library staff attended the workshop, which is a 100% improvement in attendance over previous E-rate workshops.
- c. An E-rate day-long Summit was held in July 2011 and attended by system staff who are the local E-rate liaisons from each of New York's 23 public library systems. The AM session featured a speaker from USAC who answered questions and explained the services available on the USAC website. The PM session involved workshop participants sharing Best Practices. 36 library system staff attended the Summit.
- d. An E-rate listserv was created by the State Library after the Summit to further communication among library system E-rate coordinators.

9) Broadband services for all types of New York libraries would be given support and direction through the development of a statewide Broadband Plan

A statewide Broadband Plan for all types of New York libraries was completed by March 2010, with input from the Broadband Advisory Group. The Plan can be viewed on the State Library's website at:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/gateslib/broadbnd/sustainability.htm>

Progress made in achieving the Plan's activities is explained within the amended Plan document in Appendix B.

10) Strengthen State Library partnerships at the State level to promote the importance of adequate broadband services for New York's libraries

As mentioned in the main body of the report, the State Library considers the creation of partnerships to be one of the major successes of the grant project. The State Library feels that significant progress has been made in this area evidenced in the following activities:

- a. The creation of the Broadband Advisory Group, initially created in 2009 as a grant activity to assist the State Library in planning the Broadband Summit, brought together for the first time people representing various state agencies and other statewide organizations for the purpose of discussing library broadband issues. State Library staff has continued to stay in touch with the Group members through a listserv, reaching out to them for technical assistance and input regarding library broadband issues.
- b. The Broadband Summit, held in June 2009, brought together influencers both at the statewide level as well as the local level. Various state agencies were represented. The Summit had approximately 300 attendees.
- c. New York libraries continue to be represented on the Governor's Office for Technology (OFT) Broadband Development and Deployment Council.
- d. New York's libraries have been recognized as important anchor institutions and the State Library has been invited to be one of the collaborating entities in Phase 2 of the NY Statewide Mapping Initiative.

APPENDIX B

New York State Library

Statewide Broadband Plan – Progress on Activities

This is an amended version of the Plan that focuses on the Plan's activities and the progress made. The full version of the Plan can be seen at:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/gateslib/broadbnd/sustainability.htm>

The Broadband Advisory Group decided that there would be a “three-legged stool” approach to statewide sustainability efforts, which would involve local, State, and national activities, with each “stool leg” supporting the activities of the other—giving overall strength to the desired outcome and providing opportunities for collaboration, synergy and inclusion. The three-legged approach is as follows:

- **1) Build librarian and community leader support for the value of libraries having sufficient connectivity to meet community demand and need;**
- **2) Support efforts at the federal and State level for regulations, legislation, and financial support;**
- **3) Increase E-rate funding for New York State’s public libraries.**

The Advisory Group discussed the criteria to be used in choosing statewide sustainability strategies and suggested criteria that contributed to choosing these three strategic directions: viability (likelihood of success), political feasibility, the opportunity for inclusion in future Board of Regents recommendations, the ability of State Library staff, library and library system staff to be part of the outcomes, the need for facilitating an educational environment that involves digital literacy and is adequately connected, and the potential for internet sustainability at low cost rates.

1) Build librarian and community leader support for the value of libraries having sufficient connectivity to meet community demand and need

Multiple research studies regarding internet use have cited that one of the major obstacles to having access to adequate internet is the perception that such access is not necessary. One such study was published in February 2010 by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration entitled “Digital Nation,”

seen at: http://www.ntia.doc.gov/files/ntia/publications/ntia_internet_use_report_feb2010.pdf.

Unfortunately, this is an idea that is held by many library staff, library trustees, and their local officials in a number of smaller library service areas around the State. The Broadband Advisory Group believes that before change can be effected at State and federal levels, there must be a “grass roots” support network at the local level. Identified stakeholders are: library staff, library trustees, library users, New York library system staff, local elected officials, library friends groups, local education leaders (school administrators and teachers), local Department of Labor One-Stop career center staff, the business community, vulnerable and underserved local populations, tourists, and local non-profits.

While it is difficult to offer precise numbers, the State Library knows that many of the State’s public libraries that lack adequate broadband are located in rural areas, are open limited hours during the week, and are managed by non-certified personnel. Many of these libraries lack the necessary middle mile and/or last mile infrastructure to obtain adequate broadband services. Many also lack adequate staffing resources to attend training sessions which would include learning assessment skills to identify community needs. Many are economically challenged and lack the funds necessary to purchase increased broadband service. And, unfortunately, many libraries face all of these problems. All of these factors present a significant challenge toward upgrading broadband services in their library service areas.

To achieve local level support that would result in increased broadband connections for these underserved libraries, the Advisory Group developed a list of activities they believe will assist in achieving the above-mentioned goal:

- Develop a toolkit that contains materials supporting broadband that have a clear, consistent message, accompanied by appropriate materials (which include technology lexicons), that local library staff and trustees can use with their local officials and library users to communicate the importance and value of having access to adequate broadband. This toolkit will also contain examples of collaborative models that library staff and local officials can use that require community outreach and distance learning capacity. Such toolkit will be posted on the State Library’s Gates Broadband project website (www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/gateslib/broadbnd/).

The creation of a toolkit was not done in a formalized way. Fact sheets and other explanatory materials were developed for different events, such as the New York

Library Association (NYLA) conference and the Broadband Summit, but these materials still need to be consolidated into a Toolkit and posted on the State Library's website. This activity is planned for 2012.

- Provide assistance to local library staff, trustees, and local officials to help aggregate broadband demand to achieve lower costs for services.

Meeting with library staff, trustees, and local officials was the most successful activity done at the local level, as mentioned in the main body of the report. Face-to-face meetings that explained what broadband is and why it is necessary to library services were needed as broadband is a confusing topic for many people. This is an on-going activity.

- Leverage the public computer center (PCC) model (increased connectivity and public computer access with the capability of teleconferencing services) that is contained in the State Library's BTOP project so that benefits are extended beyond the 30 PCCs in the grant project into more libraries.

Whenever possible, presentations were made on the BTOP PCC project that highlighted the value of the PCCs and how all New York libraries will benefit. In 2011, the PCCs began to offer teleconferencing services which all libraries can utilize. The PCCs are currently collaborating with another BTOP-funded project concerning digital literacy—a project managed by NYLA. Some PCCs will become training sites for this project. The State Library has been meeting with the Department of Labor to forge a partnership involving the PCCs and their local One-Stop Centers. The State Library has also been holding meetings with another state agency—the Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES)—that manages Literacy Zones statewide and has presented to their regional Literacy Zone directors about how their project could benefit from PCC services. This is an on-going activity.

- Work with local broadband vendor companies to encourage such vendors to raise the speed levels of internet access they are currently providing to libraries free of charge. Ask local communities who award franchises to broadband and cable companies to request higher speeds as a condition of the franchise.

As mentioned in the main body of the report, the public library systems in New York State act as the negotiator for their member libraries when dealing with broadband vendors. As library budgets continue to be cut and costs still continue

to rise, this role will become even more critical. Whenever possible, the State Library has discussions with broadband vendors. New York State has multiple vendors and broadband costs vary as there is no statewide regulation. This is an on-going activity.

- Work in partnership with the 23 New York public library systems, organizations that provide technical support and other cost-saving services to their individual member libraries. Library systems are sources of education information and consulting for their members and initiators of meaningful partnerships on both a regional and local level.

The 23 public library systems in New York State are the main provider of local services and training for the 1,074 public library outlets around the state. The State Library currently works in partnership with them through Gates Foundation, BTOP and LSTA grant projects. This is an on-going activity.

- Develop partnerships with State agencies and organizations that have local affiliates (e.g., Department of Labor and Small Business Administration or statewide organizations representing ethnic groups). Work with public libraries at the local level to help them benefit from these partnerships.

As mentioned previously, the State Library is currently working with the Department of Labor and ACCES to educate these agencies about public library services, especially in the area of workforce development and digital literacy. Local public libraries have reported they are also working with these agencies. Such cooperation has been documented as part of BTOP grant activities. The State Library has also developed a relationship with the Office of Cyber Security, who has recognized that libraries are important anchor institutions and has invited the State Library to be one of their collaborators involved in the statewide mapping initiative. Local libraries have been working with their local Small Business Administration offices. An exceptional example is the Miller Business Resource Center of the Middle Country Public Library (on Long Island): <http://www.millerbusinesscenter.org/>. This activity is on-going.

- Integrate requirements that demonstrate connectivity sustainability into all appropriate technology grant applications and projects submitted to the State Library, such as LSTA grants, Plans of Service, and annual reports.

The State Library has, since 2003, trained all types of library staff as to how their library programs could benefit from Outcome-Based Evaluation (OBE)-planned

projects and has integrated OBE requirements into all appropriate grant project projects and Plans of Service. The current LSTA Five-Year Plan is being evaluated according to OBE techniques and the BTOP project required each PCC to develop an individual OBE Plan. More information about the State Library's OBE statewide initiative can be seen at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/obe/index.html>

2) Support efforts at the federal and State level for regulations, legislation, and financial support

At the same time local support for broadband is being developed, efforts need to be taken at the State and federal levels to enact changes in regulations and legislation that will result in permanent and/predictable funding for library connectivity costs. This strategic direction involves but is not limited to the following key stakeholders: individual libraries and their local officials, New York library systems, the Board of Regents, the Public Service Commission, the New York Library Association, the Library Trustees Association of NYS, the University of the State of New York (USNY), the State Legislature, the Upstate Rural Resources Council, the Governor's Office for Technology, and the Office of General Services (a State procurement agency).

This strategic direction involves multiple challenges. The current economic landscape in New York State is one of fiscal crisis, with the State facing a multi-billion dollar deficit over the next five years and there is a prevailing "Tea Party" point-of-view that is advocating "No new taxes!" Additionally, there are several broadband vendors in New York State, each licensed to serve multiple regional areas, who are not supportive of legislation amending their service areas or rates.

To meet these challenges, the Advisory Group has proposed the following activities in order to achieve the above-mentioned goal:

- Reintroduce State legislation first introduced in the State Legislature in 2009 effecting a regulatory change with positive benefits for public library connectivity, allowing such libraries to contract with school districts or regional school services providers for broadband connectivity. Currently, public libraries are not able to purchase broadband services from educational entities such as Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

This legislation was reintroduced in 2011-2012, but was not passed. Such legislation is one of the NYLA priorities for the 2012-2013 legislative session. However, the Governor did sign a bill in 2010 that allows libraries to bid jointly for products and services.

- Submit a capital request for \$20 million for the FY 2011-2012 State budget to the Board of Regents. This request was submitted to the Board of Regents for the first time for the FY 2010-2011 State budget, but was not approved. Such funds would assist many public libraries to obtain the broadband infrastructure necessary to meet the 100 Mbps goal by 2015.

A capital broadband request was submitted in 2011-2012, but was not approved. The State Library has been working in partnership with NYLA to develop a broadband funding request in the hope of having it included in the Governor's budget for 2012-2013. If this effort fails, the State Library currently plans to submit another capital broadband request for the 2012-2013 legislative session.

- Work with the Public Service Commission to encourage such vendors to change their contract policies to increase the speed levels of internet access they are currently providing to libraries free of charge.

This is an on-going activity that has not yet come to fruition.

- Investigate the possibility of a State surcharge to promote universal broadband service/access.

The State Library, working in partnership with NYLA, is investigating this possibility.

- Promote the development of connectivity standards at both the federal and State levels for schools and libraries.

The State Library continues to support and promote the increase of both federal and state connectivity levels for schools and libraries at appropriate venues. The most recent example is the speech given in November 2011 by the State Library's Deputy Commissioner for Cultural Education and Acting State Librarian before the legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Libraries and Educational

Technology that explained libraries' critical role in education and talked about the need for adequate broadband services. The entire speech can be seen at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/testimony/index.html>

- Promote funding at the State level for the New York State Education Department's Statewide Educational Technology Plan (developed in 2009 - See <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/technology/techplan/>). This plan looks to libraries and other cultural institutions to create content and offer learning experiences. Infrastructure that provides adequate connectivity and broadband services to deliver the content and training is an integral part of the plan. The New York State Board of Regents will discuss the possibility of making this plan a priority and seek funding for its enactment from the State Legislature in the 2011-2012 legislative session.

The Plan does not have a statement in it with a list of projects that need funding in order for the Plan to be effective. However, the New York State Board of Regents did support various activities that support the Plan, such as providing funding for instructional technology materials.

- Promote the use of state-funded public library construction grant projects to fund library infrastructure projects that support increasing broadband connectivity.

Many of the construction projects awarded in 2010 and 2011 involved the addition and expansion of technology projects that promoted increased broadband connectivity. For the projects that will be awarded in 2012, the State Library partnered with the Adirondack Community Trust (ACT) organization to help ACT provide matching funds for construction projects in four upstate New York State counties that contained a technology component. A complete listing of projects funded with construction grant funds can be seen at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/construc/index.html>

- Promote at the State level that libraries become eligible to receive Excels State Aid, which is aid for school construction. Currently, school districts use the Excels Aid to fund infrastructure projects involving internet access and initial connectivity within their school buildings. Many library infrastructure projects are similar to such school building projects. The State aid formula is based on poverty levels and oftentimes the aid is not entirely used within a funding year.

Due to a significant New York statewide budget deficit, no progress was made on this activity.

3) Increase E-rate funding for New York State's public libraries

The State Library considers full utilization of available E-rate discounts by New York libraries an important part of its sustainability plan. E-rate discounts help support increasing connectivity costs in challenging economic times and help sustain the affordability of those costs. Approximately 76% of the library outlets eligible for E-rate in New York participate in the program. The State Library's goal is to have 100% of eligible New York libraries receive E-rate discounts by 2015.

The New York State Library currently has a designated staff person, Maribeth Krupczak, a Library Development Specialist, who has been the State Library's E-rate Coordinator for more than five years. Her responsibilities include general oversight of the E-rate program, which could involve a maximum of 755 public libraries, with a total of 1069 outlets/buildings, as well as 32 out of the 73 library systems. E-rate coordination is only one of many job responsibilities assigned to this position. Ms. Krupczak attended the Gates Foundation funded E-rate training offered by ALA's Office for Information Technology Policy (OITP), and found the information learned and peer relationships formed very valuable. Continuation of this communication network would have a positive effect on state support of program participation. It is important to note that Ms. Krupczak is not responsible for providing daily technical assistance to libraries with filing applications, etc. Technical assistance is provided to local libraries through the state's 23 public library systems and 9 Reference and Research Library Resource Councils. However, given the number of libraries throughout the state, additional support is needed in order to target activities to improve participation. One activity in this plan focuses on improving State Library facilitation of training and support for the corps of 23 public library system staff who work with E-rate applications in their regions. More information regarding the State Library's current E-Rate program can be found at: www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/univsvc/index.html

The State Library, as a unit of the State Education Department (SED), has use of the services of an SED-contracted consultant firm, E-Rate Central (www.eratecentral.com/us/nys/default.asp). This contract covers technical assistance to schools and libraries, but because of the much larger number of school applications and dollars involved, more direct service has gone to schools. Training sessions are dominated by school-specific questions and conditions. Direct library support is largely limited to E-rate contacts at the system level.

In addition to the staffing challenges above, there are three major challenges involved in achieving 100% participation. 1) Many libraries reject participation in E-rate because of their limited knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the filtering requirement; 2) Many libraries believe that E-rate applications are too complicated, requiring technical knowledge beyond their

expertise, and they are frustrated by the E-rate filing process which is prolonged and confusing; and 3) Many libraries do not have the staffing resources to dedicate to filing and following up with E-rate applications. Staff turn-over and split responsibilities play havoc with successfully advancing the three separate concurrent cycles (previous, current and next year) of the E-rate application.

To meet these challenges, the Broadband Advisory Group proposed the following activities to achieve the above-mentioned goal:

- State Library staff will take an active role in creating the State Education Department's RFP for E-rate consulting assistance. The new RFP will be issued in FY 2010-11. The State Library plans to include language for semi-annual training specifically for library staff, modeled after the OITP example.

Maribeth Krupczak, the State Library's E-rate Coordinator, has been working with members of the State Education Department (SED), SED Fiscal Management, and the State Comptroller's Office to develop and finalize an RFP statewide consulting contract for E-rate services. Language specific to library support and training has been included. A one-year contract with E-Rate Central has been approved through September 30, 2012. Work on a second RFP for a multi-year consulting contract will be issued in the first quarter of 2012.

- Recruit public library system staff to deliver E-rate application training and mentoring targeted to other public library system staff. In this train-the-trainer approach, public library system staff experienced in E-rate filing procedures will serve as resources for newer staff in other systems. The State Library depends on its library system partners to support individual members in their E-rate applications and technology planning.

The State Library held a day-long E-rate Summit in July 2011, which was attended by representatives from each of the state's 23 public library systems' E-rate coordinators. The morning session consisted of a presentation from USAC representative, John Noran, who answered questions and showed the resources offered on the USAC website. The afternoon session was a sharing session of Best Practices by the local E-rate coordinators. A listserv was set up after the Summit to foster better communication among the local E-rate system coordinators and the State Library and to encourage peer-to-peer support. There was an increase in the number of libraries participating in the 2010 E-rate funding year (373 libraries) and an increase in the amount of

funding (\$12,198,573 to date), but the extended impact of the broadband grant cannot be assessed until the 2013 E-rate funding year.

- State Library staff will provide information on telecommunications and broadband issues via its website and communications through statewide listservs. A webpage for Recovery Act funding and other broadband initiatives has been created at www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/btop/

This is an on-going activity. The broadband initiatives website mentioned above was recently updated and, as mentioned previously, a listserv was set up for local library system E-rate coordinators. State Library listservs are used to announce funding opportunities and significant initiatives. For example, the State Library heavily promoted the FCC's "Learning on the Go" pilot project. As a result, a New York State library system was the only successful library applicant nationwide.

- State Library staff will annually assess the reasons for New York State E-rate application denials to libraries and focus training on those points.

Continuing a practice begun during the Gates Foundation-sponsored state E-rate Coordinator Training, Ms. Krupczak sends email reminders to E-rate applicants in danger of missing the Form 486 filing deadline, an activity crucial to receipt of funds committed to an applicant. E-Rate Central (the consultant hired by the State Education Department to give support and assistance to libraries and schools statewide) is asked to conduct conference calls or email blasts at critical 2012 program deadlines as part of their statewide contract.

- State Library staff will work with others in the State Education Department (SED) to comment to the FCC on proposed rulemaking affecting library participation in funding for E-rate.

A significant NPRM on E-rate reform is expected in early 2012. Ms. Krupczak is a member of the ALA E-rate Taskforce and will use that opportunity to recommend an SED FCC filing as appropriate.

- State Library staff will offer conference call opportunities for library system staff to allow them to ask questions on the E-rate program and for the State Library to share program updates.

As previously mentioned, the 2011-2012 contract with E-Rate Central contains a provision for such calls. The RFP to be issued for subsequent years will also contain this provision.

- Advocate for E-rate application changes at the federal level, addressing the following possible scenarios:
 - Support the simplification proposal of the American Library Association's Office for Information Technology and Policy;
 - Advance a suggestion to make E-rate funding automatic, so that libraries would have to "opt out" instead of having to apply

Ms. Krupczak is staying abreast of proposed changes to the E-rate application via her work with the ALA E-rate Taskforce.

- The State Library will offer a program at the annual New York Library Association conference in 2010 and beyond to discuss perceived barriers to E-rate participation and offer instruction on filing procedures.

An E-rate workshop, organized by the State Library, was held at the 2010 New York Library Association annual conference at which Linda Schatz presented a program entitled "Myth Busters," which explained how E-rate discounts could be an important component of a library's technology sustainability plan. A total of 25 library staff attended the workshop.

- Where appropriate in the above activities, the State Library will include information and training to help librarians become smart consumers of technology: to first understand the services they want to deliver and the capacity those services require, and then negotiate for the necessary technology with their Board or with a vendor.

This is an on-going activity. Libraries are encouraged to attend appropriate WebJunction webinars and E-Rate Central webinars and other appropriate workshops. Announcements of E-rate Taskforce programming at ALA conferences are also promoted.

APPENDIX C – New York State Library

Gates Foundation Opportunity Online Broadband Grant- Year 2 Additional Upgrades

Library Name – Organized by System	Year 2 Speed (Mbps)	Year 2 Increase	Year 2 Additions	Additional Upgrade Detail
Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System				
Akwesasne Cultural Center, Inc.	2.5-3 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless service for laptop use
Chautauqua-Cattaraugus Library System				
Alexander Findley Community Library	15 Mbps	Y		Wireless
Gowanda Free Library	7 Mbps	Y		Wireless
Patterson Library (Westfield)	5 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless upgraded
Seneca Nation Library	4 Mbps	N- no availability	Y	Wireless upgraded
Sinclairville Free Library	8 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless
Four County Library System				
Louise Adelia Read Memorial Library	3 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless service added to meet increased demand
Oxford/ McDonough Branch	3 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless services added to meet increased demand— demand has doubled since 2010
Mid-Hudson Library System				
Catskill Public Library	25 Mbps	Y	Y	Equipment upgraded
Hudson Area Association Library	10 Mbps	N	Y	Equipment upgraded
Kent Public Library	50 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless and equipment upgraded
Kingston Library	20 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless speed and coverage increased
New Lebanon Library	5 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless speed and coverage increased

Patterson Library (Patterson)	50 Mbps	Y	Y	Increased speed, new equipment, wireless coverage
Town of Esopus Port Ewen Library	15 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless speed upgraded
Town of Ulster Public Library	20 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless speed and equipment upgraded
West Hurley Public Library	20 Mbps	N	Y	Additional wireless
North Country Library System				
Clifton Community Library (Cranberry Lake)	1.5 Mbps	N- no availability	Y	Wireless upgraded
Osceola Public Library	1.5 Mbps	N- no availability	Y	Wireless upgraded
New York Public Library				
Highbridge Branch Library	10 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless upgraded
St. Agnes Branch Library	20 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless upgraded
Onondaga County Public Library				
Baldwinsville Public Library	50 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless upgraded
Northern Onondaga Public Library - Brewerton	1.5 Mbps	N- no availability	Y	Wireless upgraded
Northern Onondaga Public Library - Cicero and North Syracuse	35 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless upgraded
Salina Free Library	20 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless
Southern Tier Library System				
Addison Public Library	5 Mbps	N-no availability	Y	Wireless and equipment upgraded
Alfred Box of Books Library	10 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless upgraded
Almond Twentieth Century Club Library	5 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless upgraded
Andover Free Library	5 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless upgraded
Bolivar Free Library	5 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless upgraded
Chemung County Library District—Vanetten Library	7 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless and equipment upgraded

Cohocton Public Library	10 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless upgraded
Cuba Circulating Library Association	5 Mbps	N	Y	Equipment upgraded
David A. Howe Public Library	10 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless
Dundee Library	5 Mbps	N-no availability	Y	Equipment upgraded. Other options being pursued
Essential Club Free Library (Canaseraga)	5 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless upgraded
Howard Public Library	1.5 Mbps	N-no availability	Y	Equipment upgraded. No direct connection available
Montour Falls Memorial Library	5 Mbps	N-no availability	Y	Equipment upgraded
Rushford Free Library	1.5 Mbps	N-no availability	Y	Equipment upgraded. Wireless
Savona Free Library	5 Mbps	N	Y	Equipment upgraded
Wayland Free Library	5 Mbps	Y	Y	Added second 5 Mbps connection; wireless upgraded
Whitesville Public Library	8 Mbps	Y	Y	Wireless
Wide Awake Club Library (Fillmore)	5 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless speed and equipment upgraded
Wimodaughian Free Library (Canisteo)	5 Mbps	N	Y	Wireless upgraded