

**BILL AND MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION  
STAYING CONNECTED GRANT PROGRAM**

*Final Report for  
Staying Connected Grant Program*

*from the*

***New York State Library***

**Grant Number 22794**

**January 18, 2006**

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## Part A – Outputs, Outcomes, and Narratives

### Hardware Upgrades/Replacement

*Upgrading and/or replacing public access computers in public libraries serving low-income communities, especially communities with persistent poverty.*

#### I. Program Outputs

Complete the following table to describe your program’s outputs to date.

	Total # Planned	# Complete to Date	% Complete to Date	Notes
1) Computers Upgraded/Replaced	N/A - numbers depended on individual library systems	112	100%  (Based on percentage of total money spent to date)	Three public library systems in New York State participated in the Computer Upgrade in this Staying Connected grant period. These are the three systems originally designated by the foundation at the beginning of the grant: Brooklyn Public Library, Buffalo and Erie County Public Library, and The New York Public Library.
2) Library Buildings that Received Upgraded/Replacement Computers		18		

#### II. Program Outcomes

For each anticipated program outcome (i.e. the effect of your program’s activities on the participating libraries or library staff), summarize the results to date, including outcome indicators and data sources. Please add additional tables as necessary.

<b>Outcome #1</b>	Brooklyn Public Library: Patrons will benefit from faster, more reliable public-access computers in three branches.
<b>Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Library staff involved with the public-access computers will report less time spent troubleshooting equipment.</li> <li>Library patrons will enjoy increased facility of use and an improved experience in using electronic resources.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Sources</b>	Anecdotal reports
<b>Results Summary</b>	The Gates Staying Connected grant provided the library with 21 computers; 36 were needed to replace all the outdated computers at the selected branches. The library provided more than the required match amount to purchase the additional 15 computers. The replacement of these computers offers enhanced, faster, more reliable computers for patrons. Anecdotal reports show that patrons are happy with the new system and grateful for the improved quality of computer technology. With more reliable computers, patrons’ computing experience has been enriched and library staff can now concentrate on providing better customer service rather than using limited time to troubleshoot old and broken computers.

<b>Outcome #2</b>	Buffalo and Erie County Public Library: Library staff and patrons will benefit from a new automation system and upgraded software and hardware that will improve the experience of library staff and patrons in the primary training lab.
<b>Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library staff will receive much-needed ongoing training due to the replacement of outdated equipment.</li> <li>• Staff efficiency at using new software will increase.</li> <li>• The training lab will be able to train more patrons at public sessions, decreasing or eliminating the backlog in demand.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Sources</b>	Staff and patron comments
<b>Results Summary</b>	The replacement of 34 computers in 2 buildings has allowed staff to satisfy the demand for increased training. One hundred percent of the circulation staff can now use Sirsi Unicorn Workflows version 2004, which was not possible with the older computers used previously in the training lab because they did not meet the minimum requirements to run the software. Response time of the new computers is also at least 200 to 300 percent greater than that of the older computers, allowing more material to be covered in training classes. All the participating trainers have reported a reduction in computer downtime and improved equipment operation; they do not need to stop teaching to troubleshoot hardware problems. Public training has been greatly enhanced with the use of the new flat-screen monitors and greater resolution.

<b>Outcome #3</b>	The New York Public Library: Equipment needs of patrons will be met by new public-access PCs, printers, and servers, making it easier for them to seek and retrieve information, or receive instruction.
<b>Indicators</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff involved with public-access computer equipment will spend less time troubleshooting outdated machines and making site visits for repairs.</li> <li>• Staff will be able to assist patrons more efficiently with updated software running on the new computers.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Sources</b>	Staff comments
<b>Results Summary</b>	By replacing 63 computers in 13 locations throughout the system, the New York Public Library continues to provide a stable inventory of operational equipment that runs current software and minimizes repair and site-visit expenses. The library is better prepared to respond to the needs of patrons related to seeking and retrieving information and instruction in information literacy.

### III. Questions

Provide a brief response to each of the following items.

- A. What, if any, work remains to complete your hardware upgrade/replacement program? When will this work be completed?

The three public library systems involved have expended all available funds and submitted final reports and have thus completed the hardware upgrade/replacement program.

- B. What was the biggest challenge the state library and/or individual libraries faced in implementing the hardware upgrade/replacement program?

The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library system experienced many difficulties due to local funding problems, which threatened to close the system by the end of 2004. Since then, the issue has largely been resolved, although some branches were forced to close due to the funding problems and some branches may be closing in the near future.

- C. What are your next steps for working with local libraries to ensure the sustainability of the new hardware?

The need for upgrades and replacements is ongoing, especially for public-access computers that serve large patron communities and locations where demand is heavy. All three public library systems continue to seek funding opportunities for future upgrades and improvements to public-access computer resources. In addition, the New York State Library will be taking part in the Gates Public Access Computer Hardware Upgrade Program in 2006, which will provide over \$1 million to five library systems.

## Training Support

Supporting the development of public access computer training programs for the state's public libraries. Funds for training may be used to pay for a variety of costs associated with the design and delivery of training.

### I. Program Outputs

Complete the following table to describe your program's outputs to date.

	Total # Planned	# Complete to Date	% Complete to Date	Notes
1) Training Sessions Offered (if online, report online course registrations)	Numbers depended on training options selected	596	100%	These numbers are totals from the 23 public library systems in New York State.
2) Library Staff Trained	1104	3414		
3) Library Buildings Represented in Training Sessions	1104	694		

### II. Program Outcomes

For each anticipated program outcome (i.e. the effect of your program's activities on the participating libraries or library staff), summarize the results to date, including outcome indicators and data sources. Please add additional tables as necessary.

<b>Outcome #1</b>	Library staff members will improve their skills in helping patrons with electronic resources, such as the online public-access catalog, electronic databases, and other resources available on the Internet.
<b>Indicators</b>	Over two-thirds of staff members who participate in training sessions will feel more confident in using electronic resources.
<b>Data Sources</b>	Observation, comments, and program evaluations
<b>Results Summary</b>	78% of the 1912 library staff members who attended electronic resources training sessions said they have an increased understanding of electronic resources such as the online public-access catalog, electronic databases, and the Internet. Staff members increased their confidence in using these resources and improved their searching skills in querying online databases. Most report satisfaction with the training sessions and are now better equipped to provide information services to public library patrons.

<b>Outcome #2</b>	Library staff members trained in Outcome-Based Evaluation will use new skills to improve grant writing and evaluation of public programs and to sustain public access computing.
<b>Indicators</b>	Staff members who participate in OBE training will increase their OBE knowledge and implement newly learned OBE methods to prepare grant applications, reports, and public library programs.
<b>Data Sources</b>	Comments and program evaluations
<b>Results Summary</b>	80% of the 249 library staff members who attended OBE training sessions said they gained a basic knowledge of OBE, from measuring outcomes, to improving program impact, and searching for indicators. This will contribute to the quality of library services, programs, and grant-writing efforts. Although it is too soon to assess whether or not OBE techniques have made an impact on grant and project proposals, the library systems expect that in the long term, OBE will help staff to shift towards a culture of assessment, in which all library services, programs, and products are evaluated for quality and impact.

<b>Outcome #3</b>	Library staff members will become comfortable and proficient in using Microsoft Office Suite applications, automation systems, library intranet, e-mail applications, and other internal software resources.
<b>Indicators</b>	Staff members who participate in training sessions will feel increased comfort and confidence in using these technological tools and in helping library patrons to use them.
<b>Data Sources</b>	Comments and program evaluations
<b>Results Summary</b>	72% of the 1253 library staff members who attended software resources training sessions felt better prepared to deal with applications such as Word, Excel, automation systems, and e-mail applications. Staff members have an increased understanding of computer technology and terminology that will help them with internal office work as well as assisting patrons on public-access computers.

### III. Questions

Provide a brief response to each of the following items.

- A. What, if any, work remains to complete your training program? When will this work be completed?

All 23 public library systems have expended all available funds and submitted final reports and have thus completed this phase of the Staying Connected training program. The grant application states that the goal of the program is to train “at least one person from each of the 1,104 library buildings.” Although 3,414 people were trained, over three times the goal, only 63% of the library buildings were represented in this training.

- B. What was the biggest challenge the state library and/or individual libraries faced in implementing the training program?

In New York State, the State Aid for libraries was cut for the 2004-2005 fiscal year. This \$4.5 million cut was restored for 2005-2006. The library aid budget is still at the 2002-2003 level, however, which has not increased since the early 1990s. Libraries have experienced challenges in delivering programs because of reduced training resources. Buffalo & Erie County Public Library also faced additional local funding problems, which are still being resolved.

- C. What are your next steps for working with local libraries to ensure retention of the skills gained from the training you conducted, and to provide additional opportunities for continued skills development for library staff?

The need for training in New York’s 1,080 public libraries and branches is ongoing and the New York State Library is committed to addressing these needs, working in partnership with the 23 public library systems. The State Library is currently sponsoring free OBE training sessions for library system staff as part of an IMLS-approved plan. Sessions were held in three locations throughout the state in April 2005, and the public library systems were urged to attend. The State Library also awarded over \$1 million in federal LSTA funds through New York Online Virtual Electronic Library (NOVEL) invitational grants to 62 library systems throughout the state in 2004-2005, many of which are continuing in 2006. Many of these projects focus on training public library staff members in using online databases and increasing the awareness of electronic resources in libraries. Through additional training sessions, as well as invitational and competitive grants, the State Library will continue to work with public library systems to provide opportunities for skill development, learning, and growth in new technologies. In addition, the New York State Library will be taking part in further grants through the Gates Foundation and Web Junction. These include Staying Connected Phase 2 and the Rural Library Sustainability Project in 2006 and the Spanish Language Outreach Program in 2007.