

Needs Assessment

The Libraries for the 21st Century initiative⁵ yielded higher levels of state funding during the period 1996 through 2001. This additional funding was used for licensing subscription databases, increased state aid to public libraries and Regional Library Systems, continuing education and training grants, grants for children's services, and scholarships for professional library education. LSTA funds also had significant impact, providing over \$1.3 million for technology and support for library services in over sixty Nebraska communities, from 1998 to 2002.

In April 2001 the Nebraska Library Commission launched a venture called "Making a Difference @ your library™." This project involved Library Commission staff visiting 269 public libraries in Nebraska in a fifteen-month period. Each visit included discussions with library personnel about the impact federal and state grants have had on services and programs. NLC staff collected stories and data about local library service successes and challenges and other community resources and support venues.

Each visit also included a community dialogue session, attended overall by hundreds of Nebraskans, representing library customers, members of Friends and Foundation groups, community and county officials, and other interested community representatives. The data collected at these dialogue sessions were analyzed to determine prevailing statewide trends and issues, and to identify the existing and anticipated needs for library and information services listed below.

Programs and services:

- materials, services, and personnel to meet growing multi-cultural diversity;
- accessible space for technology and community meeting opportunities;
- increased staffing;
- more knowledgeable staff;
- increased hours at local library facilities;
- programming for people of all ages; and,
- remote access to local, regional, and statewide library resources.
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Knowledge, skills and abilities:

- computer technology, including Web, database, office suite software, and digitization;
- ability to work and succeed in local, regional and state political arenas;
- community assessment;
- ability to locate grant opportunities and write successful grant applications;
- maximizing use of subscription databases;
- staff development and volunteer recruitment and training;
- long range and strategic planning;

⁵ www.nlc.state.ne.us/mission/lsta.html

- marshalling advocates;
- leadership, budgeting, and outreach; and,
- knowledge of marketing and public relations.

The following goals, activities and intended outcomes are a result of an analysis input gathered from stakeholders and are related to the following LSTA purposes.