

IMLS-funded programs and services for older adults*

****Selected list of grantees through LSTA (Library Services & Technology Act) Grants to States and discretionary programs (National Leadership Grants for Libraries; Laura Bush 21st Century Librarians Program) that have provided services for aging populations. This list is organized by the categories in the American Library Association's "Guidelines for Library and Information Services to Older Adults."***

1. Acquire current data about the older population and incorporate into planning and budgeting

1.1. Buckeye Public Library—AZ

2011 · \$13,763 · LSTA Grants to States

The "Computer Basics for Seniors" project addressed the need for computer training among the local senior population in response to many requests for help in filling out online applications or communicating with family via email. The library began by interviewing senior patrons regarding their computer abilities and what they hoped to gain from the classes. To create training capacity in light of the constantly used public access computers, the library purchased ten laptop computers with grant funds. The program's 22 training sessions provided a service that was not freely available to seniors anywhere in the community; the skills they gained resulted in new levels of autonomy and empowerment.

1.2. Office of Commonwealth Libraries—PA

2011 · \$24,788 · LSTA Grants to States

The Office of Commonwealth Libraries in Pennsylvania formed an Older Adults Advisory Committee to discuss issues of concern to older adults and promote activities that could enhance library services to senior citizens in Pennsylvania. The committee works with other Pennsylvania state agencies to disseminate information on Medicare, health issues, and financial and retirement resources. During the project period the committee updated a listing of websites of interest for older adults and provided a best practices handout for use at the Pennsylvania Library Association Conference. The Office of Commonwealth Libraries used these materials for a conference program session and exhibit for librarians serving older adults and people with disabilities.

2. Ensure that the special needs and interests of older adults in your community are reflected in the library's collections, programs, and services

2.1 H. Grady Bradshaw-Chambers County Library—AL

2011 · \$11,600 · LSTA Grants to States

The H. Grady Bradshaw-Chambers County Library and Cobb Memorial Archives preserved oral histories of local veterans in east central Alabama for future generations to experience. The project was part of a two-pronged preservation program to collect and preserve local military histories and make them widely accessible. With the assistance of a local videographer, the library and archives taped interviews with 45 local veterans, and shipped them to the Library of Congress for inclusion in a globally accessible database. Local veterans also provided original manuscripts, photographs, military records, and other artifacts for digitization and inclusion in the library and archives' War Service Center files. Participating veterans represented the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines and served in WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Soviet Cold War, Desert Shield, Desert Storm, and Iraqi Freedom.

2.2 Conejos County Library District—CO

2011 · \$10,000 · LSTA Grants to States

In a rural community where 25 percent of the population lives below poverty level and the majority make their living from ranching or farming, the newly opened Antonito Branch Library sought to update its collection and encourage families to read and discuss books. To its existing collection of duplicate titles from the main branch and patron donations, the library added 4,500 new books that would reach across all ages from early readers to seniors. To promote this updated selection of reading materials, the library partnered with the local senior center to reach out to older patrons about new large print books and to facilitate monthly senior outings to the library.

5.1 Camas Public Library—WA

2011 · \$1,150 · LSTA Grants to States

To fill an unmet programming need, Camas Public Library reached out to patrons over the age of 50 and provided them with opportunities to reach lifelong learning goals, stimulate their minds, and make social contacts. Program topics included eBay, retirement, photosharing, downsizing and life transitions. Through this project, the library initiated relationships with other local partners and increased its visibility as a resource for lifelong learning and social interaction for midlife adults.

2.3 Tualatin Public Library—OR

2012 · \$34,751 · LSTA Grants to States

The library sought to engage older adults in sharing their talents and learning useful skills as they progress from midlife to older age. The project's multi-pronged strategy included creating an inventory of skills and talents among those aged 55 and older who were willing to share their expertise; engaging older adults to foster the love of reading in young children; and gathering feedback to improve the library experience for seniors. The library also recruited youth technology coaches to provide computer classes for the target audience, an additional example of intergenerational programming. Other course offerings focused on art and writing and Tai Chi, and by the end of the grant project 99 classes had reached 657 participants.

3. *Make the library's collections and physical facilities safe, comfortable, and inviting for all older adults*

3.1 Decorah Public Library—IA

2011 · \$35,138 · LSTA Grants to States

With an estimated 14.8 percent of Iowans aged 65 and older, and visual disabilities prominent among that population segment, the state library granted funds to Decorah Public Library to distribute large-print and audio books to libraries throughout the state. Through a cost-effective process, they sent materials to 160 libraries on the permanent rotation list, as well as to 60 additional libraries that participate on an as-needed basis. Over 35,000 large-print items circulated during the project period and reached an estimated 2,000 people. Survey data showed that 95 percent of respondents continued to read because of the availability of the service, and 86 percent had a better quality of life because of large-print books.

3.2 Lakeshores Library System—WI

2011 · \$7,811 · LSTA Grants to States

Lakeshores Library System improved accessibility for patrons with visual disabilities by providing each branch with Zoom Text Magnifier/Reader software. Following staff training, the libraries partnered with local senior centers to demonstrate the software and raise awareness of its availability. In addition, grant funds enabled the installation of an automatic door opener at the Matheson Memorial Library in Elkhorn to improve access for disabled patrons. The Lakeshores Library System also created a large-print library card application that could be customized by each member library.

3.3 South Carolina State Library—SC

[Note: approximately ten percent of all LSTA Grants to States funding is spent on similar projects in the U.S.]

2012 · \$437,136 · LSTA Grants to States

The state library's Talking Book Services (TBS) program provided direct services to South Carolinians unable to see normal size print, hold a book, or turn pages. The target audience is the segment of the state's population that meets the eligibility requirements (blindness, visual impairment, reading disabilities, and physical impairments that make using standard print difficult or impossible). Although all of the state's public libraries now offer audio books and many have e-books as well, none offer the wide selection provided by the TBS program. With an estimated 1.1 million residents aged 65 and older expected in South Carolina by 2020, the TBS program continues to experience increased demand for this type of service, which supports educational development and an improved quality of life.

4. *Make the library a focal point for information services to older adults*

4.1 University of Maryland at College Park—MD

2009 · \$387,541 · Laura Bush 21st Century Librarians Program (Research in Early Careers Development)

In this Early Career Development project, Bo Xie of the University of Maryland's College of Information Studies designed a public-library-based program to provide high-quality, Internet-based health information to seniors from diverse backgrounds. Grounded in participatory design methodology, the research project incorporated a cadre of committed, older adult volunteers who helped design the curriculum and served as peer trainers, teaching other senior volunteers how to access, evaluate, and use a broad range of quality online resources. The resulting curricula, procedures, and other guides were made available to public libraries nationwide.

4.2 Hartford Public Library—CT

2011 · \$11,180 · LSTA Grants to States

Obesity is prevalent in Hartford, and many residents die from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and stroke. In response, the library devised the "Cooking It Up! Hartford, Health and History" program to deliver health and wellness information to its older adult community and emphasize the vital relationship between food, social memory, and cultural tradition. Through a series of ten cooking workshops featuring chefs from local restaurants as well as a professional nutritionist, the library offered healthy cooking alternatives to over 300 adults aged 55 and older. The workshops were taped, edited, and made available for online viewing at the Hartford History Center, and they aired repeatedly on the city's public access television station, Channel 5. Post-workshop surveys found that 96 percent of attendees reported an average 49 percent increase in knowledge about modifying recipes to make them healthier. The library also posted healthy recipes on its website and added related materials to its collection.

4.3 Alele Museum, Public Library and National Archives—MH

2013 · \$40,720 · LSTA Competitive Grants to Territories and Freely Associated States

Alele Museum, Public Library and National Archives, the designated State Library Administrative Agency for the Marshall Islands, continued its technology training and book lending services for seniors by engaging youths from a local high school and a partner organization as computer trainers. Alele supplemented this digital literacy training with a twice-weekly mobile book lending service for seniors. Through this project, the community benefitted from intergenerational sharing opportunities while increasing digital literacy among the Marshall Islands' aging population.

5. Target the older population in library programming

5.2 Athens-Clarke County Library—GA

2010 · \$343,100 · National Leadership Grants for Libraries (Library-Museum Collaboration)
Together with the Lyndon House Arts Center, the Athens-Clarke County Library developed new services and programs for its baby boomer population. The project website (<http://www.boomersinathens.org>) promoted program offerings, including “Community Snapshots,” which showcased local baby boomers’ expertise through live webcasts. The project also recorded locals’ stories to highlight community diversity. The partnership expanded local library and museum services and offered a best-practices model to engage active older adults in the work and mission of libraries and museums in their communities.

5.3 Buffalo and Erie County Public Library System—NY

2011 · \$17,400 · LSTA Grants to States
The Buffalo and Erie County Public Library conducted training classes that would facilitate a more informed adult and senior citizenry, better versed in Web 2.0 skills and technologies such as Flickr, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. By the end of the project period, a total of 203 library workshops reached 1,421 participants. As a result, attendees reported increased confidence across all measures, including being able to use a computer and the demonstrated websites more effectively. Participants also reported confidence gains in the ability to find information pertinent to their interests.

5.4 Bell Whittington Public Library—TX

2011 · \$20,910 · LSTA Grants to States
Two coastal Texas libraries with rising senior populations – Bell Whittington Public Library and Ingleside Public Library – provided technology training to patrons aged 55 and older through partnerships with local businesses and a retirement community. The libraries purchased new computer equipment with LSTA funds and hired an additional trainer for offsite classes. With seven computer classes per week at five locations, the program offered a total of 256 classes that reached over 1,500 attendees. It also encompassed hundreds of one-on-one tutoring sessions. The libraries created a series of online tutorials and handouts for students to access outside of the formal instruction time.

5.5 Everett Public Library—WA

2011 · \$4,762 · LSTA Grants to States
With approximately 25 percent of the library’s service population in the midlife age range, the “Living the Full Life After 50” project expanded local offerings for that target audience. The library presented four workshops on the cycle of change, healthy transitions to new life stages, encore careers or new life paths, and unfulfilled goals. The project also included 14 “retooling” computer classes focused on building skills in word processing, spreadsheets, and digital photos. The program was designed to fill a gap in the community, and it strengthened awareness of library services as valuable resources for midlife adults.

5.6 Southwest Wisconsin Library System—WI

2012 · \$21,835 · LSTA Grants to States
Recent Census data shows that Wisconsin is tied for the “oldest state” and continues to age rapidly. Many seniors in Wisconsin are “aging in place,” and those who live in the same communities their entire lives, tend to be less healthy, affluent, and educated. The “Bridging the Gap” project targeted this population and provided them with computer instruction at 11 participating libraries. Through an initial one-week course and five follow-up sessions, participants learned how to use a computer and the Internet, and were exposed to a range of relevant topics such as medical information, benefits, and cyber safety. Based on pre- and post-assessment surveys, participants’ comfort with computers increased along with new skills and knowledge.

5.7 Ford City Public Library—PA

2012 · \$2,703 · LSTA Grants to States

The library created a new collection by conducting oral histories of local residents with a memory of World War II and the Great Depression. Through interviews with 15 people, the collection grew to 13 video recordings, 15 audio recordings and 5 bound transcripts. The resulting digital archive of local history and community memories appealed to a broad audience and preserved local culture and history. By the end of the project period two participants had died, which underscored the project's importance and the urgency in collecting senior community members' memories.

5.8 Berkshire Athenaeum—MA

2013 · \$7,500 · LSTA Grants to States

Berkshire Athenaeum offered a series called "Boom!" on pursuing a healthy, creative, and productive retirement for the generation born 1946-1964. More than 40 percent of the Berkshire County population is over the age of 50. The library partnered with the Friends of the Berkshire Athenaeum, Ralph J. Froio Center, and RSVP Berkshire to develop and sponsor a calendar of nearly 20 special events for this age group. The Boom! program offered events on topics based on survey feedback, ranging from financial planning to digital photography. The grant also funded new books and other materials geared toward boomers' interests.

6. *Reach out to older adults who are unable to travel to the library*

6.1 Athens-Limestone Public Library—AL

2011 · \$19,900 · LSTA Grants to States

This project enabled the Athens-Limestone Public Library to expand their books-by-mail program with formats such as large-print, audio books, and e-books. The project was specifically targeted to the elderly, homebound, and disabled residents of Limestone County, where the senior population is on the rise and 17 percent are disabled. The library purchased 419 large-print books, 280 audio/visual materials, and 18 e-readers. As a result of the grant, the library also expanded its relationship with the Council on Aging and established new partnerships with health care and assisted living organizations, as well as civic groups.

6.2 Contra Costa County Library—CA

2011 · \$9,423 · LSTA Grants to States

In an effort to improve services to local seniors who are homebound or unable to drive, Contra Costa County Library partnered with the City of Brentwood to purchase and lend e-readers pre-loaded with reading material. The library surveyed patrons on their reading interests to inform collection development, purchased six e-readers, added e-books and audiobooks to each device, and created how-to documents to circulate with the device. The library partnered with Senior Outreach Services and volunteers from a local Meals on Wheels program to deliver the e-readers to homebound seniors.

6.3 Pomfret Public Library—CT

2011 · \$4,887 · LSTA Grants to States

In collaboration with the Pomfret Senior Center, the library provided a mobile technology lab for hands-on technology tutoring sessions and informational workshops for older adults. The lab offered its target audience the opportunity to develop the basic computer and Internet skills needed to remain well-informed and active members of the community. By the end of the project period, the library had offered 13 sessions to 46 participants and fielded 20 requests for one-on-one assistance. Additionally, the library's 59 tutoring sessions reached 139 attendees. Post-training evaluations found that participants gained comfort in using the Internet and felt the sessions had a positive effect on their lives.

6.4 Danville Public Library—IL

2011 · \$33,869 · LSTA Grants to States

The Danville Public Library's outreach department and volunteers delivered library materials free of charge to Danville residents in their homes, senior citizen apartments, nursing homes, a senior center, a medical center, and other locations. With an infusion of new collection materials using LSTA funds, homebound patrons expressed gratitude for new large print books and audiobooks from a wide variety of authors.

6.5 Georgetown Public Library—SC

2011 · \$56,148 · LSTA Grants to States

The Georgetown Public Library (GPL) implemented a year-round Words on Wheels bookmobile service (WOW!mobile) to provide library access to residents who experience physical or geographic barriers to library service. Grant funds supported a community outreach librarian, library materials, and supplies for the bookmobile. At the outset of the project, the librarian collected information from senior residents to make selections relevant to their needs, and the WOW!mobile started making scheduled stops in May 2012. The librarian continued to solicit requests throughout the project and, pending availability, brought them on her next stop. The WOW!mobile service ensured that physically limited seniors did not feel as isolated and could enjoy books, CDs, and DVDs for enrichment and education.

6.6 Dane County Library Service—WI

2011 · \$19,413 · LSTA Grants to States

The library created and circulated 15 adaptive thematic outreach kits targeted to patrons who reside in nursing or assisted living facilities or attend programming at Dane County Area Senior Centers. The majority of the target audience was unable to leave the 58 facilities that the project served and had no other access to library materials and programming. Dane County Library Service worked together with area partners to develop the kits around patrons' informational/recreational reading and programming needs. Themes ranged from the American West to the Green Bay Packers, and facility directors used the kits to help spark conversation and memories. Sample materials included large-print and audio books, Wii adaptive equipment, and iPads, which were all very well received.

6.7 Guntersville Public Library—AL

2012 · \$7,000 · LSTA Grants to States

More than 20 percent of Guntersville, Alabama, residents are over the age of 65, as compared to 14.5 percent statewide. The Guntersville Public Library reached out to this group by establishing deposit collections at two senior centers, one church, and one hospice care facility. The library used grant funds to select and purchase 377 large print books for these collections. They saw an increase in traffic from family and friends of the target audience, who had seen the deposit collections and wanted library books for themselves. As a result of the project, local organizations that serve the elderly began to view the library as a partner in their field.

6.8 Fairfield Public Library—CT

2013 · \$5,000 · LSTA Grants to States

The Fairfield Public Library's "Skype-a-Docent" project grew as an extension of its Homebound Service. In addition to delivering books, the library brought virtual tours of cultural interest to seniors and others who might not be able to travel out of town. Each month a different museum presented several tours of artwork and collections along with a question and answer session by museum docents. The live sessions were projected for participants at the library, and the project also offered virtual tours at several local senior living facilities. The project replicated best practices found in Queens Library's award-winning Book Club for the Homebound.

7. Train the library's staff to serve older adults with courtesy and respect

7.1 Peninsula Library System—CA

2009 · \$170,025 · Laura Bush 21st Century Librarians Program (Continuing Education)

The Peninsula Library System, partnering with state library agencies in California, Idaho, Oregon, and Washington, offered a “Transforming Life after 50” fellowship program to practicing librarians that was designed to improve library services to older adults. Fellows learned from leaders in the field of aging, health, lifelong learning, and civic engagement, in order to apply the lessons to their libraries. As a result, fellows experienced positive changes in attitudes and understanding of aging issues and were better equipped to implement innovative models for library service to seniors.

7.2 New Jersey State Library—NJ

2011 · \$9,264 · LSTA Grants to States

The one-day “Boomer Conference,” modeled after the “Transforming Life After 50” institute, shared information about baby boomers with library staff so that they could better respond to their needs. The conference was presented in partnership with LibraryLinkNJ, New Jersey’s statewide library cooperative. Expert speakers addressed topics such as aging brains and brain health, boomers and the state of the economy, and assisting boomers facing work transitions. Participants rated the conference highly and came away with new perspectives.

7.3 Southern Adirondack Library System—NY

2011 · \$11,400 · LSTA Grants to States

The purpose of the project was to provide a series of continuing education workshops to the Southern Adirondack Library System’s staff and trustees. Workshops were designed to give these stakeholders the skills and knowledge they needed in order to best work with the many diverse groups of people who use the libraries daily. Among the workshop topics was Serving Senior Citizens, in which librarians focused on how to develop innovative and practical ways to serve this ever-growing population of library users. Attendees returned with varied ideas for implementation, such as a seniors webpage, retirement planning workshops, and matinee lunches; they shared these ideas with the wider library community through reports posted to the library system’s blog.

7.4 Westchester Library System—NY

2013 · \$500,000 · National Leadership Grants for Libraries (Demonstration)

The Westchester Library System, in partnership with Lifetime Arts, the American Library Association’s Public Programs Office, and AARP Foundation sought to improve, expand, and sustain creative aging programs in public libraries and position libraries as community cornerstones for positive aging. Built on Lifetime Arts’ capacity-building model, this initiative reflects new scholarship on the benefits of social engagement and creative expression for healthy aging, employs nationally recognized best practices in arts education, and promotes partnerships between librarians and arts and community organizations. Through the Lifetime Arts Affiliate Network, librarians participated in in-depth training, received ongoing technical assistance, participated in a national peer network, and received support to implement programs in their communities. The program offered a practical, replicable, and sustainable approach for transforming library services for older adults to align with new knowledge, societal priorities, and collaborative practice.

There are many other IMLS-funded programs and services for older adults throughout the United States. For more information, please contact imlsinfo@imls.gov.