

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

"Computer Basics for Seniors" 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 maintains 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 Metropolitan Library Service Agency—MN

2010 · \$76,131 · LSTA Grants to States

The "Brain Fitness Project" provided brain health education to over 1,000 users in the St. Paul metropolitan area through one-hour workshops and self-directed "brain fitness stations." Fifty "Maintain Your Brain" public education workshops held in member libraries and outreach partner sites reached 657 participants. Among workshop attendees aged 55 and older, 99 percent reported increased knowledge of a healthy brain in connection with overall health and normal aging. The project team also installed 29 "brain fitness stations" in member libraries and outreach partner sites, consisting of circulating books, handouts, and do-it-yourself brain fitness games and activities.

2.2 Sam Houston State University - Newton Gresham Library—TX

2010 · \$8,000 · LSTA Grants to States

The “TexTreasures Grants” project documented and made widely accessible a collection of sixty-six oral history videos featuring Texas military veterans. Oral histories in the collection were conducted by the Library of Congress Veterans History Project or donated by the HEARTS Veterans Museum of Texas. The library outsourced oral history transcription, which allows full-text searching capabilities for the entire collection of videos. Library staff provided quality assurance, video conversion, search functionality, metadata development, and OCLC cataloging to make the videos globally accessible. They also added direct links to the collection through a number of related Wikipedia articles.

2.3 New York Public Library—NY

2010-2011 · \$70,800 · LSTA Grants to States

“Becoming an Age-Friendly Library” served older adults through intensive technology courses and targeted library collection development. Through a series of ten-week technology courses, related workshops, and informal talks, the project reached a total of 381 participants in the target age group over several years’ time. Follow-up technology training survey data showed positive changes in participants’ skills and attitudes. The library also purchased technology titles targeted to this population and offered capacity-building workshops to staff involved in the technology training. In both the coursework and collection development aspects, the project reached speakers of English and Spanish alike.

2.4 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.

2.5 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 main branch duplicate titles 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.

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

3.1 Onondaga County Public Library—NY

2009 · \$29,536 · LSTA Grants to States

The “Starburst Accessibility Project” was developed to meet the needs of users with low vision by purchasing assistive computer technology. Staff from nine branch libraries received training in the use of the ZoomText and Jaws software. The library partnered with the National Adult Education Organization (NAEO), a community provider of adult education classes. This partnership resulted in the installation of adaptive equipment at fifteen workstations in NAEO’s continuing education center.

3.2 Office of Commonwealth Libraries—PA

2009-2011 · \$111,845 · LSTA Grants to States

“Senior Spaces” was a statewide initiative designed to foster innovative services for three segments of the older adult population: baby boomers, retirees, and the elderly. Allen Kleiman developed the concept of “senior spaces,” which provides not only a physical space for active seniors but also programming in the areas of lifelong learning, civic engagement, health and wellness, and volunteering. Over several years of the program, nineteen Pennsylvania libraries were awarded \$4,000 each to implement their own senior spaces. As part of the project, participating libraries also convened a Senior Space (Older Adult) Advisory Committee made up of patrons in their communities.

3.3 Lakeshores Library System—WI

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

Lakeshore 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 Lakeshore Library System also created a large-print library card application that could be customized by each member library.

3.4 Maine State Library—ME

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

2011 · \$298,229 · LSTA Grants to States

The “Talking Books Plus” program is Maine’s regional library system for the National Library Service (NLS) for the Blind and Physically Handicapped and provides large-print books, talking books, descriptive video, and recordings. During the project period the program circulated 39,546 talking books, 45 descriptive videos, 67,548 digital books and 7,529 large print books to residents of Maine who are certified as blind, visually impaired, or physically handicapped. Over 1,000 institutions also received “Talking Books Plus” materials.

3.5 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.

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

4.1 Americans for Libraries Council (ALC) and partners in NY, CT, and VA

2007 · \$241,808 · National Leadership Grants for Libraries (Library-Museum Collaboration)

The “Re-Imagining Age Project, Inc.” developed public programming among cultural institutions that engaged intergenerational audiences in exploring the American aging experience from historical, cultural, and artistic perspectives. Project communities of Norfolk, VA; Hartford, CT; and Suffolk County, NY were selected for their relatively large numbers of active older residents. ALC, its national advisors, and partners worked with the demonstration communities to develop an Age in America Programming Guide, provide content and technical expertise, and ensure online and face-to-face networking. A culminating report enabled local libraries and museums to build a community of practice.

4.2 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.

4.3 Bucks County Public Libraries—PA

2010 · \$30,000 · LSTA Grants to States
The “Information Literacy for Seniors” project connected library patrons aged 55 and older to Web 2.0 technologies through classes, technology gadget fairs, and a targeted website. Library staff and volunteers were trained to facilitate classes for this community of older patrons, and the project team developed related web tutorials. Over 80 classes reached 347 people, of which 97 percent reported increased knowledge as a result of the class. Three participating libraries offered technology gadget fairs, several of which were held during senior expos that numbered approximately two hundred attendees.

4.4 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 to 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.

5. Target the older population in library programming

5.1 California State Library—CA

2007-2010 · \$1,574,083 · LSTA Grants to States
“California of the Past” was a statewide pilot project that aimed to document the recollections of baby boomers and aging adults. Participants were invited to recall and record stories about California’s history at digital storytelling stations installed in six pilot libraries. The stories were then posted online (<http://www.digitalstorystation.com>) for all users to view. The libraries also held community screenings throughout the year.

5.2 Hartford Public Library—CT

2010 · \$16,048 · LSTA Grants to States
The “Arts & Archives” project of the library’s main branch provided local seniors with heritage-based seminars and hands-on fine arts and humanities workshops taught by professional artists. The series offered classes focused on pen and ink drawing, sculpture, poetry, digital photography, music appreciation, mixed media, and memoir writing, and it used library collections to enrich the hands-on instruction. A majority of the 136 participants were over the age of 55 and had no previous formal training in the selected medium. Following 35 workshop sessions, participants contributed 70 original works of art to a curated exhibition in the library’s ArtWalk gallery space.

5.3 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 and memories to highlight and share community diversity. As a result, the partnership expanded library and museum services beyond existing walls and offered a best-practices model to engage active older adults in the work and mission of libraries and museums in their communities.

5.4 First Regional Library—MS

2010 · \$14,949 · LSTA Grants to States
Through “Elders Remember Panola County Music” the library documented important local music history by training teenagers to conduct oral histories with seniors. The histories were made available to the larger community in DVD and online video formats. Funds also expanded the library’s collection of local music history resources with input from local residents. As the project garnered attention, it resulted in donations of local music history materials from interviewees and other community members, and the oral histories gained even wider exposure when showcased at a blues festival in Clarksdale.

5.5 Oregon Institute of Technology—OR

2010 · \$32,587 · LSTA Grants to States
The Shaw Historical Library’s project at the Oregon Institute of Technology, “Seniors to Seniors,” collected oral histories of longtime residents to document local 20th century history. Retirees and other volunteers recorded 22 interviews and completed interview transcripts. Through this process they also developed an oral history transcription style guide and operations guide to help sustain the project after the grant period. They collected and processed archival materials through the completion of six finding aids and work on five more. Among other outcomes, the project grew the library volunteer base by 51 new participants, increased library hours with volunteer support, grew local history collections, and forged community connections to secure future acquisitions.

5.6 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.

5.7 Carnegie Free Library of Beaver Falls—PA

2011 · \$5,000 · LSTA Grants to States
The Carnegie Free Library of Beaver Falls provided relevant and current health information targeted to women from their teenage through senior years. The library purchased age-appropriate materials in various formats and held programs to promote the collections. One program, a three-part series for seniors, addressed health and safety issues including fall protection, healthy eating, and strength conditioning. These library resources and information provided female patrons with a stronger awareness of current health considerations, as well as an understanding of potential health concerns in all phases of their lives.

5.8 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, as well as 315 one-on-one tutoring sessions. The libraries also created a series of online tutorials and handouts for students to access outside of the formal instruction time.

5.9 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 Basics of Buying on eBay; Five Steps to a Successful Retirement; Mastering the Art of Photosharing; Downsize Now!; and Tools for Life Transitions. Through these programs, the library initiated relationships with other local partners and increased its visibility as a resource for lifelong learning and social interaction for midlife adults.

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

6.1 Lee County Library System—FL

2010 · \$9,995 · LSTA Grants to States

“Community Conversations” developed a volunteer corps to provide intellectually stimulating library programs for older adults living in senior residential facilities, attending adult daycare programs, or participating in congregate meal programs. As part of the project, the library expanded its collection of programming materials and hosted invitational workshops on reminiscence-based programming for library staff and senior service providers.

6.2 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. Although the e-readers were slower to catch on with homebound patrons, large-print materials, e-books, and audio books were considered successful aspects of the project. As a result of the grant, the library also expanded its relationship with the Council on Aging and established new partnerships with local health care and assisted living organizations, as well as other civic groups.

6.3 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 Meals on Wheels program to deliver the e-readers to homebound seniors.

6.4 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.

6.5 Danville Public Library—IL

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

The Danville Public Library's outreach department and its 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.

6.6 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. Throughout the project the librarian continued to solicit requests 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.

6.7 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 reached by the project 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.

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 California State Library—CA

2010 · \$121,507 · LSTA Grants to States

Following the success of the “Transforming Life After 50” multistate fellowship program, this project expanded the community of California library professionals working to better serve adults aged 50 and older. To support over 90 participating librarians in their yearlong, continuing education fellowship, the California State Library identified speakers for the fellowship institute, facilitated six online learning courses, enhanced related websites, created an online “innovators community,” and offered targeted grants to twelve California-based fellowship participants to implement new approaches in their libraries. Based on final assessment surveys, fellowship participants reported increased knowledge, and 94 percent went on to make progress in implementing enhanced service and engagement strategies for older adults.

7.3 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.

7.4 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 member library 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.

7.5 Westchester Library System—NY

2011 · \$450,000 · National Leadership Grants for Libraries (Demonstration)

The Westchester Library System, in partnership with Lifetime Arts, Inc., and the American Library Association’s Public Programs Office, demonstrated a new and robust model for public libraries to deliver and sustain meaningful instructional arts programs for an aging population. By demonstrating approaches for implementing creative aging programs in urban, suburban, and rural library systems, the “Creative Aging in New York Public Libraries” project served as an example for similar capacity-building initiatives. Partners included the Brooklyn Public Library, Clinton Essex Franklin Library System, and the New York Public Library. It will culminate in a free online Creative Aging Took-Kit for Public Libraries, field-tested by project partners and disseminated by ALA in 2013. The project website is available at <http://www.westchesterlibraries.org/creativeAging>

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