



A SUMMARY OF FLORIDA'S LSTA-FUNDED E-GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS, 2009-2010

April 7, 2010

The Information Institute produced this summary by working collaboratively with all other Florida public libraries with LSTA-funded E-government programs, and the State Library and Archives of Florida, via the *E-Government Services in Public Libraries Grant*. This program is funded under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, administered by Florida [Department of State](#), Division of [Library and Information Services](#). The Information Institute has been involved in a number of E-Government projects in recent years (see Appendix).

For additional detail about the eight LSTA-funded E-government programs in Florida public libraries projects please contact each project's contact person. The projects include:

- Alachua County Library District:
 1. North Central Florida E-Government Services Project; and
 2. Library Partnership Branch and E-Government Services
- Hialeah Public Libraries:
 3. e-government e-mpowerment
- New River Public Library Cooperative:
 4. Training, continued
- Orange County Library District:
 5. The Right Service at the Right Time: Navigating E-Government
- Panhandle Public Library Cooperative System:
 6. Mossy Pond E-Library
- Pasco County Library Cooperative (with FSU Information Institute):
 7. E-Government Services in Public Libraries; and
 8. Pasco County E-Government Initiative Continuing Year 3

The list is not comprehensive of all the E-government efforts in Florida as several entities offer E-government services and resources that are not currently LSTA-funded.

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Alachua County Library District

1. North Central Florida E-Government Services Project 2008-2009 and 2009-2010

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In October of 2008, the Northeast Florida Library Information Network (NEFLIN) contracted with the Alachua County Library District to lead a project intended to discern the needs regarding E-Government services in the North Central Florida Region, then train library staff and provide support. Rural and economically challenged counties were seen as having the greatest need of assistance and were targeted for the grant. The library systems served by this grant were: Columbia County Public Library, Suwannee River Regional Library (serving Hamilton, Madison and Suwannee Counties), New River Public Library Cooperative (serving Baker, Bradford and Union Counties), Three Rivers Regional Library System (serving Dixie, Gilchrist and Lafayette Counties), Levy County Public Library System, Nassau County Public Library, Putnam County Library System and Flagler County Public Library.

An E-Government Project Team from the staff of the Alachua County Library District was selected to implement the project. The team visited all target library systems and spoke to staff in order to understand the needs and circumstances of the libraries. After needs were assessed, teams traveled and delivered 12 training slideshows to the 8 library systems with 53 library staff in attendance. Each county received a digital copy of the training in order to train other staff in the library systems.

Issues facing rural and economically disadvantaged libraries included training available staff, staffing levels, and infrastructure. The grant helped address infrastructure issues. Twenty-seven laptops were purchased to be used as dedicated E-Government services points for patrons. For the smaller library systems we were able to purchase 1 laptop per location was provided. For the larger library systems, such as Suwannee, the grant provided as many laptops as the budget allowed. Laptop cases, USB drives and security cables were also purchased. Each library system received a computer tutorial for beginners. The idea was that the E-Government laptop could be used to help patrons become computer literate. The team also created and delivered an E-Government brochure that was printed up and delivered to each county. The brochure gave patrons information on what items/information they need to when applying for food stamps, unemployment or employment.

For fiscal year 2009-2010, the E-Government service project was funded again, in order to provide follow through assistance and support for the target libraries. The goals for this project include:

- 1) Ensure the use of E-Government laptops and facilitate use if needed;
- 2) See if additional laptops are needed; and
- 3) Provide additional hands on training and support for E-Government for staff.

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2. Project and Partnership Branch Library and E-Government Services

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The Library Partnership is a collaboration among Alachua County Library District (ACLD), the Florida Department for Children and Families (DCF), its local lead agency, The Partnership for Strong Families (PSF), the Casey Family Program, and approximately 30 social service agencies working through PSF. The project was initially designed to reduce the number of children removed from homes due to neglect or abuse. Working with the Casey Family Program, DCF and PSF looked at the traditional concept of a neighborhood resource center where social service agencies rotate staff through one facility to assist families in need of support.

Concurrently, the library district was looking for a library presence in the same geographic area. ACLD learned about the project and DCF/PSF desire to have a partner for their venture. From the PSF/DCF side, collaboration with the public library masked any stigma attached to one entering a facility designed just for social service aid. From the ACLD perspective, the venture provided an opportunity to reach new library users coming to the facility for social service meetings.

The Library Partnership expanded the traditional library role ACLD provides in E-government services. By sharing space with service providers and having regular dialogue, ACLD staff and social service partners provide coordinated and complementary services to meet a client's full needs. Many social service workers were unaware the extent to which libraries provide this level of assistance.

The scope of services now reaches beyond foster care issues. As word spread about The Library Partnership, other agencies, including faith-based and local governments, that provide health services, rent and utility subsidies, legal services, tax assistance, substance and domestic abuse counseling, etc. now provide services at this location. The Library Partnership has been used as a distribution point for a back to school clothes drive, food distribution, a book drive to build home libraries, and as a collection point for a weekend backpack food program for elementary school children in the free lunch program.

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Hialeah Public Libraries

3. e-government e-empowerment

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The City of Hialeah Library Division's "e-government e-empowerment" project provides technology and e-government training to residents of the City of Hialeah. Hialeah is the second largest city in Miami-Dade and the fifth largest in the state with an estimated population of 206,931, an unemployment rate of 15.2% and where 94.4% of residents are of Hispanic origin, 72.11% are foreign born and 91.9% speak Spanish as a first language. A large percentage of the City's recent, low-income Hispanic immigrants need access to job-related services, government information and social assistance. The project includes upgrade of Wi-Fi access in the main library (JFK) and expansion of wireless connectivity to two branches, the Curtiss and West e-Libraries, that serve the most heavily populated and impoverished areas of the City. The project also provides laptops to make services available in separate and more discrete places within these three outlets.

The main library has been conducting bilingual e-government workshops in groups for several months. Individual and small group coaching is scheduled to begin on March 29th. The library also maintains dedicated sections of its blog with English and Spanish e-government resources.

New River Public Library Cooperative

4. Training, continued

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New River is in the second year of an LSTA grant to train adults to use computers and assist with e-government and job skills needs. In year one, equipment was purchased, a teacher hired, and classes developed. The mobile lab went to the libraries in three counties and trained

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adults on basic computer use. Staff worked to assist people with e-government needs. Though it was hard to catch the people most in need some success was achieved. A webpage with links to government info, <http://www.newriver.lib.fl.us/online.htm> was developed. Working with Alachua County, training was provided for staff as well as handouts for users. The library developed policy for e-gov assistance and a print notebook for staff with copies of most used government forms.

In year two, basic computer training for adults continues. New components were added including intermediate classes and Job Skills with Learning Express, (see Learning Express link on New River webpage) to assist those looking for jobs with information to brush up on job skills. Assistance to those with e-gov needs is still provided. Working with Alachua County, laptops were provided for e-gov use to each library. Training on e-gov issues was provided to all staff at a recent staff day.

A link to class schedules are provided on New River webpage and thru Library Events link, <http://engagedpatrons.org/Events.cfm?SiteID=7766>

Orange County Library District

5. The Right Service at the Right Time: Navigating E-Government

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The Orange County Library system (OCLS) project goal is to build a tool through which a service consumer, the “service seeker”, can answer an iterative series of questions to create a profile that seeks key matches to available government and public services as well as library resources. The tool will be called the “Service Seeker Discovery Engine” or SSDE. Without providing personal information (such as SSN), the user answers questions on factors such as status (marital, employment, citizenship), service need, age, preferred language options, etc. Based on responses to these questions this “interactive agent” matches needs, background and eligibility to the right service or resources.

We have issued an RFP for services for a software developer. The system will be built using Open Source tools and the source code will be freely available for review. Library staff are developing a project taxonomy and currently flow charting the entry into various services. When a developer is selected work will begin on the creation of the SSDE as well as the service provider records. We will develop a “provider council” to assist in the development of records for service providers and to help with beta testing of the product.

This product can help services seekers, potentially already overwhelmed by the challenges of E-Gov, to make the process more manageable. By the end of the grant period a fully developed interface for the public with ability to connect to services and library resources initially related to job searching and unemployment will have been developed. Staff will be

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trained to assist. Open E-Gov sessions will be held to introduce service seekers to introductory computer skills as necessary and to the SSDE specifically. We hope to see a Phase 2 for further statewide applications should the funding be available.

Panhandle Public Library Cooperative System

6. Mossy Pond E-Library

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The Mossy Pond Library and Park will provide many learning and recreational opportunities for residents with a 3,500 square foot building, playground, picnic areas, hiking/nature trails, walking/bicycle trails, and a basket ball court. There is an identifiable Muskogee-Creek Indian population in the area. The park on completion will have a ceremonial fire circle and a sweat lodge. It is this juxtaposition of cultures, technology, books, rural-environment, and socio-economic levels that will make the provision of e-library service an exciting challenge.

The Mossy Pond Public Library is being developed as an e-library whose primary access to information, health, and economic services will be through the Internet. E-Services are anticipated to include overlapping components of workforce development, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, Adult and Family literacy, Food Stamp and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, FEMA, Income Tax filing, Health Literacy, Social Networking, E-Government, E-Democracy, E-Commerce, and Distance Learning. These services will be made available to the 1,000 people living in Mossy Pond. It will take staff support to enable many of the residents to use the library and to feel comfortable with computers because of the high English and computer illiteracy. Forty-four percent (44%) of Calhoun County adults over 25 do not have a High School Diploma and 29% are considered functionally illiterate according to latest Florida Literacy Data & Statistics (www.floridaliteracy.org).

The Mossy Pond Public Library building is situated in the far Northwest corner of Calhoun County and is easily accessible to Bay County residents through Highway 231. It is anticipated that in the event of a multi-county disaster, such as a major hurricane, that this building will be heavily used by FEMA to serve both Calhoun and Bay County residents. The E-Library will be a major resource to these efforts. The library building will meet State of Florida criteria as a Hurricane Shelter. Interestingly, this will be the only building in the county that is certified as a Red Cross Shelter. It will also be the only county facility that will jointly provide services of the Public Library, the Health Department, Healthy Start, the Sheriff's Department, Voting precinct, and Department of Children and Families through on-site service provision and Internet Access. The Internet in the absence of service representatives will be the primary access point for families needing help and the only point of access for DCF or U. S. Government sites.

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Pasco County Library Cooperative

7. E-Government Services in Public Libraries (with FSU Information Institute)

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Pasco County Library Cooperative (PCLC) and Florida State University's Information Institute (Information Institute) will conduct the following tasks for the E-Government Services in Public Libraries Grant.

1. Develop a statewide E-government web portal (PCLC)

This portal will include access to E-government resources and services; links to specific Florida and appropriate federal agency E-government resources and services.

The Information Institute will contribute the following to the web portal:

- Conduct Brief Needs Assessment -The Institute would build upon previous work conducted at the Institute as well as work in progress at Pasco County Library Cooperative and other public libraries in the state in determining the suggested content, organization, and design of a statewide E-Government Web Portal; and
- Usability/Functionality/Accessibility Testing for the Statewide E-Government Web Portal- Once the web portal is developed by Pasco County, the Information Institute will test the web portal

PCLC will contribute the following to the web portal: design, develop and initially deploy a statewide web portal. The web portal will include:

- An image of the state of Florida; each library or library system within Florida will have a hyperlink to that library's e-government web page, if available;

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- Three Blogspot templates will be created for libraries that do not currently have E-government websites. These templates will be available for download. Once created these Blogspot pages can be linked to the web portal;
- A timeline of the web portal project development;
- A section dedicated to federal resource links and information;
- A section dedicated to Florida resource links and information; and
- A section dedicated for library professionals including a means for librarians to contribute and comment on the web portal.

2. Evaluate Florida Public Library E-Government Programs (FSU Information Institute)
Develop a statewide evaluation strategy for all the various E-Government awards the State Library has made during 2009-2010.

The Information Institute will contribute the following to the Evaluation project:

Develop a statewide evaluation strategy for all the various E-Government awards the State Library has made for 2009-2010 using LSTA funds. The overall purposes of the evaluation are (1) to assist E-Government program participants fine-tune and improve program activities throughout the project and (2) to provide a means for completing an overall assessment of Florida public library E-Government programs.

PCLC will contribute the following to the Evaluation project:

PCLC liaison for this project will consult with the liaison from the State Library of Florida who will review and approve the Evaluation project.

3. Expand E-Government Service Roles for Public Libraries (FSU Information Institute)
Expand and better specify the E-Government service roles originally developed by the Information Institute in the Needs Assessment of Florida Public Library E-Government and Emergency/Disaster Management Broadband Services in order to operationalize those service roles for practical application in public libraries.

The Information Institute will contribute the following to the Service Roles project:

- Review E-Government service roles at the basic and advanced levels;
- Design a data collection schedule of appropriate methods (e.g., surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc.) to discover current best practices and the feasibility of each of the service roles; and
- Specify and operationalize the E-Government service roles for practical application in Florida public libraries.

PCLC will contribute the following to the Service Roles project:

PCLC liaison for this project will consult with the liaison from the State Library of Florida who will review and approve the Service Roles project.

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8. Pasco County E-Government Initiative Continuing Grant Year 3

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The Pasco County E-Government Initiative Continuing Grant Year focuses on enabling Pasco County residents to gain access to online government information and to learn the skills necessary to effectively utilize these E-government services. These goals are to be accomplished by:

- Providing E-government assistance to Pasco County residents by library public services staff in the library branches and through one-on-one appointments with the E-Government Services Manager;
- Offering E-government services and programs to the public in the library branches and at outreach locations and;
- Developing online multimedia tutorials.

During the first year, laptops were distributed to the library branches and training workshops for the public were conducted. During the second year, PCLC continued providing E-government services offered during the first year with the addition of outreach programs. PCLC developed E-government tutorials, blogs, and other tools, which can be accessed via the E-Government Tools page (<http://pascolibraries.org/egovtools.shtml>)

In recognition of the importance of sharing the challenges and successes of the E-Government Initiative, PCLC has been sharing best practices and lessons learned with other libraries statewide and nationally. Seminars were presented by PCLC at various library consortiums in Florida, at the State Library and Archives of Florida, and at Florida Library Association Conference 2009. PCLC also provided training materials to Webjunction (<http://www.webjunction.org/gi21-intro-egovernment/-/articles/content/91741367>) and to the American Library Association Committee on Legislation's E-Government Services Toolkit.

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Appendix: Information Institute Selected E-Government Activities

The Information Use Management and Policy Institute (Information Institute)¹ at Florida State University has been involved in both the assessment and development of E-government services in public libraries for a number of years. In 2006, the Institute published a paper describing the importance of public libraries in the delivery of E-Government services based on national survey data collected as part of the Public Library Funding and Technology Access Survey² (funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation).³

Other work, reported in *Library Journal* later in 2006 summarized the various challenges faced by public libraries in the delivery of E-Government services.⁴ In December 2006, the Information Institute and American Library Association sponsored a national conference on the role of public libraries in E-Government presenting a national plan for action that was described in a 2007 report.⁵ Recently, the Institute described strategies for libraries to provide more efficient, effective, and citizen-centered E-Government services.⁶ This work was based, in part, on a 2008 study that summarized *Florida Public Libraries and E-Government: Services, Issues, and Recommendations*.⁷

¹ <http://www.ii.fsu.edu>

² <http://www.ala.org/ala/aboutala/offices/ors/plftas/plfundingoverview.cfm>

³ Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., Langa, L. A., & McClure, C. R. (2006). Public access computing and Internet access in public libraries: the role of public libraries in e-government and emergency situations. *First Monday*, 11(9), n.p. Retrieved April 21, 2009, from <http://www.uic.edu/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/1392/1310>

⁴ Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., Langa, L. A., & McClure, C. R. (2006). Drafted: I want you to deliver E-Government. *Library Journal*, 131(13), 34-37. Retrieved August 12, 2009, from <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6359866.html>

⁵ McClure, C. R., McGilvray, J., Barton, K. M., & Bertot, J. C., (2007). *E-Government and public libraries: Current status, meeting report, findings, and next steps*. Tallahassee FL: Information Use Management & Policy Institute, College of Information, Florida State University. Retrieved August 12, 2009, from http://www.ii.fsu.edu/announcements/e-gov2006/egov_report.pdf

⁶ Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., & McClure, C. R. (2008). Citizen-centered E-Government services: Benefits, costs, and research needs. In S. A. Chun, M. Janssen, & J. R. Gil-Garcia (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 9th annual International Digital Government Research Conference* (pp. 137-141). Digital Government Society of North America. Retrieved June 15, 2009, from <http://www.ii.fsu.edu/~cmclure/publications/Citizencentered15March08.pdf>

⁷ Gibson, A. N., Bertot, J. C., McClure, C. R., Mandel, L., & Snead, J. T. (2008). *Florida public libraries and E-Government: Services, issues, and recommendations*. Tallahassee FL: Information Use Management & Policy Institute, College of Information, Florida State University. Retrieved August 12, 2009, from http://www.ii.fsu.edu/documents/reports/FL_Egov_2008Report.pdf