

A Brief History

LSCA: A Brief History by Brian O'Neill

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Democracy is an inclusive process. Thomas Jefferson was among the first and foremost in a line of distinguished Americans to argue that libraries and education were the foundations of democracy. A government by the people would only act as wisely as an educated and informed electorate. LSCA is certainly a manifestation of the Jeffersonian spirit. The whole intent of this legislation is to bring the opportunity for learning and knowledge to every household and every community.

Over the past thirty nine years the program has been amended with each legislative extension. These amendments are an example of democratic government working at its best. Each came in response to a real need at the state and local level for federal partnership.

LSCA in Indiana, A Brief History

Indiana is indicative of how this program has performed in other states, LSCA has proven to be a very effective piece of legislation indeed. Its original purpose was to extend public library services into rural areas. In the sixties and seventies this meant helping to finance new construction and increasing the numbers of professional librarians through scholarship programs.

What the LSCA Scholarship Program Provided to Indiana Introducing the Former LSCA Scholarship Recipients

Caddell displays "Calculus," a painting by Konrad Juestel of Valparaiso, Indiana.
Photo by Mary Patchett.



Charles
Caddell
Director
Frankfort
Public Library

Ray Ewick
Director
Indiana
State
Library

My library education was made possible by LSCA and ILA scholarships and the G.I. bill. I took the Frankfort job to repay my scholarship and have made this my home. I started as the Director of the Frankfort Library July 9, 1973 and I still serve as Director. The *Frankfort Times* awarded me the Clinton County Citizen of the Year in 1974 for my work in the community. I established the Clinton County Contractual Public Library in 1984 to serve the remaining 11,000 residents of Clinton County with the help of LSCA funds. The construction of our new library and cultural center would not have been possible without an LSCA grant of \$486,000. We received a bequest of \$1,350,000 and raised over \$300,00 from local donations.

Claude W. Caddell

Ken Israel
Director
Marion
Public
Library



Pat Schaefer
 Director
 Muncie Public
 Library

I had almost a year of public library experience, but no degree in library science, when I was interviewed for the position of Audio-Visual Librarian at the Muncie Public Library. When I was hired, it was with the stipulation that I would begin studying during the summers for my master's degree in library science. In my first year at MPL I was encouraged to apply for the LSCA scholarship and spent the next four summer terms at the University of Michigan Library School. Upon completion of my degree I remained at MPL, later becoming Assistant Director and then Director.

Pat Schaefer

Charlene Holly
 Personnel
 Manager
 Allen County
 Public Library

Sue Israel
 Administrative
 Assistant
 Marion Public
 Library

It's hard to believe that it has been 18 years since I was lucky enough to receive an LSCA grant to pay for one of my library science classes. The LSCA money was like a shot in the arm to keep me on the right path and not give up. I went on to stay 11 years at Jeffersonville and helped to develop their talking book section and to expand their large print area and became totally enthralled with local history and genealogy programming. When you go to school part time for 13 years after your bachelor's degree you start to wonder if it is really worth it. The LSCA grant was a little message saying, "You can do it." I hope those funds will always be there to help and encourage others to keep working toward their dreams.

Stephen Day

Steve Fortriede
 Associate
 Director
 Allen County
 Public Library

Stephen Day
 Director
 New Albany
 Public Library

"Tax dollars spent on libraries are used efficiently, and the money is a necessary investment in our future. Libraries will become even more important with the necessity of the workforce to continue educating itself on new technology and new information. Libraries are one of the most important government-provided services."

Philip T. Warner
Indiana State Representative

In 1960, 21.4 per cent of Indiana's population was without public library service; by the early eighties that percentage had decreased to 6 per cent. As a result of county bookmobile demonstration projects by the mid-eighties, twenty new county libraries were established and library service was extended to 483,875 Indiana citizens. The cost per capita for extending services for each new patron amounted to \$4.94 or annually \$1.65 per capita.

In the eighties and nineties, the emphasis changed to the creation of human and technical infrastructures among libraries and to programs which reached groups who remained unserved because of special circumstance such as physical impairment, poverty, or foreign language. This cost effective partnership between federal, state and local government continues to the present in the constellation of programs associated with LSCA.

Over the past thirty nine years the program has been amended with each legislative extension. These amendments are an example of democratic government working at its best. Each came in response to a real need at the state and local level for federal partnership. As presently worded, the LSCA Declaration of Purpose reads as follows:

It is the purpose of this Act to assist the States in the extension and improvement of public library services to areas and populations of the States which are without such services or to

which such services are inadequate and to assist Indian tribes in planning and developing library services to meet their needs. It is the further purpose of this Act to assist with (1) public library construction and renovation; (2) improving State and local public library services for older Americans, and for handicapped, institutionalized, and other disadvantaged individuals; (3) strengthening State library administrative agencies; (4) promoting interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing among all types of libraries; (5) strengthening major urban resource libraries; and (6) increasing the capacity of libraries to keep up with rapidly changing information technology.

Democracy is an inclusive process. Thomas Jefferson was among the first and foremost in a line of distinguished Americans to argue that libraries and education were the foundations of democracy. A government by the people would only act as wisely as an educated and informed electorate. LSCA is certainly a manifestation of the Jeffersonian spirit. The whole intent of this legislation is to bring the opportunity for learning and knowledge to every household and every community. Where there was a real need, LSCA has always had the right response.

To get a sense of how LSCA has worked in Indiana, let's look at what it has accomplished over the years in two representative communities, Hammond and Muncie.

What have LSCA Funds Meant to the Hammond Public Library?



Through LSCA funds, a bond issue, and the Library's Operating Budget, we constructed a branch library adjoining an elementary school and across from public housing. The building enabled us to close three school-based libraries, and provide a much larger collection and a very well-used meeting room for programs and community groups.



In collaboration with social service organizations, we provided adult literacy services through computers, learning software, books and non-print materials to dislocated workers, families and older adults.



We began outreach services to the elderly, including homebound delivery to shut-ins by volunteers and monthly Senior Day education and entertainment programs in the Main Library.



Bi-folkal slide/video kits were provided for older adult programming.



Books for adult new readers were added to the collection.



The seven library districts in Lake County conducted a study on what was needed for bibliographic access among area libraries.



LSCA funds for handicapped accessibility of buildings were coupled with Community Development Block Grant funds from the city of Hammond, donations from the Anderson Foundation, and the Operating Budget to provide automatic door openers in our seven buildings, and ramps where necessary.



We installed a CD-ROM computer and software for access to periodical articles, and subsequently added other CD-ROM resources through the Operating Budget.



To serve the deaf and hearing impaired, we purchased a TDD and books, and provided public programs on deafness and hearing impairment, sign interpreters for public programs, and signing instructions for staff with additional funds from the Friends of the Library.



We established an after-school computer center for central Hammond youth in the Youth Services area in the Main Library, with three multimedia computers and learning software.



We learned of community needs for planning through focus groups.



Concept boxes were purchased for preschool and day care centers.

What have LSCA Funds Meant to the Muncie Public Library?



We established a branch library in 1968 as a pilot project in a community center in a previously unserved, low income section of the city. Eighteen years later, the Library is still in the community with full branch service, operating totally from the Library's budget.



As a result of LSCA funds to the state automation network, we borrowed a second cataloging terminal to begin converting the records of our holdings to machine-readable form.



In 1984, we created a microcomputer-based community information and referral service with LSCA funds. The database, which has continuous updating capabilities, is one of only a few such projects in the country. We have produced printed directories of human services agencies, public officials, civic and professional organizations, church and clergy listings, and buildings with handicapped access.



In 1982, we began using the Training and Educational Data Service in a pilot project. This on-line database of occupational, educational and financial aid information provides a vital service to a community hard-hit by unemployment.



LSCA provided the funds to begin the much needed renovation of our 80 year old Carnegie building.



Most recently, LSCA funds have enabled the Library to work closely with our local literacy coalition in a coordinated community attack on adult illiteracy. Adult education materials are being added to each neighborhoods branch through the grant.



The LSCA-funded Interlibrary Loan system has also enabled our Library to operate more efficiently. Items not available locally can be obtained quickly and at minimum cost from other libraries throughout the county.

"My Dad always took my brother and me to the library on Saturdays. He said, 'It might be the Depression, but no one is poor if they have a library card.'"

Caryl Smith Okamoto

Many other libraries have similar stories. And beneath the outreach and literacy programs, the new computers and on-line databases (all initially funded by LSCA), it was the network building institutions created by LSCA that made this new programming efficient, effective, and possible. INCOLSA and the ALSAs did more than create opportunities for interlibrary loan. Converting records to machine readable data in both large and small libraries requires tremendous planning and cooperation. New technology must be installed and staffs retrained. INCOLSA, the ALSAs, and the State Library have made remarkable strides in this area because of progressive leadership and the support of LSCA funds, but their work was not simply technical. They forged *human alliances* among the libraries so that human resources could be shared as well as materials. Many cultural and educational programs were brought to small and large libraries which would not have been possible without cooperative funding, grant writing, planning, and collection development.

There are many other parts to the LSCA story which we are not able to touch on. Suffice it to say, there is solid, constructive work going on in our libraries all over this state without a great deal of fanfare or publicity. Through demonstration sites, libraries continue to try to bring service to unserved areas.

Major resource libraries in our larger cities work on better ways of serving not just their own municipalities, but the smaller library districts around them. Perhaps the most compelling part of the history of LSCA, however, is the personal testimony of the people affected by the programs here in Indiana. Betty Martin, Director of the Vigo County Library, has served with distinction in many capacities including Chair of the Indiana State Library Advisory Council. Here are some of her personal observations about LSCA:

 hrough my years on the Indiana State Library Advisory Council, I have observed how LSCA funds have made a positive

impact on the people of Indiana.

- The grandfather, mother and son enjoying an intergenerational story time on a Saturday morning.
- The day care provider using specially developed library programs and services to improve the quality of care.
- The fax machine in a rural public library bringing the resources of the university to a farm child's science project.
- The deaf mother using a TDD that enables her to communicate her need for consumer information for a purchase for her family.
- The residents of a senior housing complex in a small town reading books from the branch library located on their premises.
- Adult learners in any one of many literacy programs in large and small communities that depend upon the leadership and resources of the library to support and maintain the volunteer efforts that are helping them learn to read.
- People using the best library resource to meet their needs regardless of where in the state they may live by participating in the reciprocal borrowing service among libraries.
- Library staff being trained in how to use computer technology to the greatest advantage for their particular community.
- People of all ages accessing the Internet and enrolling in distance learning courses through the assistance of their local public library.



Photo courtesy of Dave Repp.

Has the program made a difference in peoples lives? The comments which follow are from political and business leaders and from just plain ordinary

citizens helped by the library and the services introduced by LSCA.

Libraries contain the wisdom, wit, and knowledge of our world, its history, and its hopes. Libraries are literally storehouses of knowledge, they are facilities for reading, for relaxation, entertainment, and education.

I am an ardent consumer of our local library's inventory, using it for speech research, self improvement, and an understanding of our nation's heritage and the individuals creating it. In addition to researching speeches prepared for a variety of groups, I thoroughly enjoy political novels, biographies, and books on our political process and personalities.

Robert D. Garton, Indiana State Senator

In the mid-1970s, a local library was a very boring place to me. I'm totally blind, and all those books and other printed materials were inaccessible to me. I felt as though I were in a strange land where nobody spoke my native language.

But now it's 1994, and thanks to several media formats, the public library no longer seems alien. I'm even privileged to be doing my small part to make the library more accessible to those of us who are blind or visually impaired. On Tuesday mornings, I make Braille labels which identify the titles and authors of the cassette books in the library's collection.

Debbie Morgan

If it were not for my girls in their bookmobile, I would not have made it through the last two years. Their time and helpfulness has made these years passable. The only enjoyment I had was the wonderful selection of books brought to me. I owe a debt of gratitude to all the people connected with the library.

Carlis Dowdy

In 1989 it was discovered that in addition to our daughter's mild cerebral palsy, the vestibular area of her brain was depressed or only barely functional. This meant she was unable to write and do other necessary skills in kindergarten. It was the decision of the

doctors and also her teacher, her father, and I that Heather be withdrawn from school until she was capable of functioning at a higher level. Here's where the library comes in. Heather could take in information but couldn't put it on paper. So the librarians told me of the discs on their computers about alphabet, spelling, numbers, addition, making words, etc.

We worked for one to two hours, Monday through Thursday, at the library from October 1989 through February 1990, and guess what? Due to that availability and the librarian's suggestion, Heather learned to spell her name, count, add, spell, and read and was very much ahead of her 1990 kindergarten class. She also then learned to write. She still does very well, and we're very thankful to the library.

Tracy Evans

I quit school at the age of 17. By the time I was ready to continue school, I was too old to go back to school. My library gave me the chance to learn and earn my GED. I'm grateful to the library for giving me the chance to get my GED and a better job. Thank you.

Shawn Weaver

From the adults I have tutored, I will never forget the look of happiness and the happiness in the voice of a 28-year-old woman when she read an unfamiliar word. "I read that word all by myself." This happened after only a couple of sessions with phonics. The ability to read gives freedom. Freedom to try new ideas, to soar and reach unknown heights. The freedom to be yourself and live the good life.

Ann Walsh

Ive learned that libraries not only change the lives of youngsters, but also oldsters like Myself. The library gives me a second chance to educate myself. The library is a place to get the newest or oldest information on subjects from A to Z. If what you need isn't locally available, they'll help you even if they have to go through the State Library. The best part is you don't have to leave town or spend a lot of money.

Isabel Leisure