REPORT OF FOCUS GROUPS
EVALUATION OF OREGON'S FIVE-YEAR LSTA PLAN

Introduction

This report of the seven focus groups held in Oregon the week of October 17-21, 2011, includes the following sections:

- Description of the focus group process, including attendance and the agenda.
- Description of the collective findings organized by
  - Seven statewide programs
  - Needs and trends
  - Continuation of statewide programs
  - Potential statewide programs

This report presents the results of focus groups with no interpretations or recommendations. These results, along with the results from the survey, interviews, and document review, will form the basis of the Final Evaluation Report, which will contain final interpretations and recommendations.

Focus Group Process

We held seven, two-hour focus groups across Oregon. Karen Strege conducted three focus groups and Nancy Bolt conducted four focus groups. Table 1 shows a list of the sites of the focus groups and the number in attendance:

Table 1: Focus group locations and number of participants

Location	Number of participants
Eugene (Bolt) Eugene Public Library	8
Grant's Pass (Bolt) Josephine County Library	5
La Grande (Strege) Eastern Oregon Community College (In-person and conference call participants)	6
Lincoln City (Bolt) Driftwood Public Library	6
Madras (Strege) Jefferson County Library	6
Portland (Strege) Midland Library, Multnomah County	7
Wilsonville (Bolt) Wilsonville Public Library	11

We drafted the Focus Group agenda questions, and the Library Development Division staff members provided feedback. The final set of questions is found in Annex 1. In summary, the proposed questions covered:

- A review of statewide programs focusing on the impact of the program.
- Issues facing Oregon and potential library responses to these issues.
- Relation of ongoing funding of statewide programs to competitive grant allocation.
- Possible new statewide programs that might warrant LSTA funding.

Findings

The information below is organized by the major programs discussed and answers to questions about needs and trends, continuation of current programs, and possible new programs. We will fully explore all of these topics in the LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation.

Programs and topics explored in the focus groups include:

Programs
- Collaborative Summer Library Programs and Youth Services
- OSLIS
- Continuing education
- Plinkit
- L-net
- Databases
- Competitive grants

Other Topics
- Needs and issues
- Continuation of statewide programs
- Potential statewide programs

For programs that were discussed in at least four of the focus groups, we prepared tables of categorized comments to find commonalities among the different focus groups. The tables identify these commonalities and how many focus groups had participants who made comments on these topics. Participants in other groups may also hold these opinions, but did not express them. Additional topics beyond these common ones are also reported, although fewer focus groups reported them.

<u>Comments on the State Library</u>

Oregon library workers appreciate the efforts of the State Library. They have a lot of good will for the staff members and for the institution. They praised the State Librarian's tenacity, vision, and political acumen.

One group proposed a vision session with the New State Librarian to identify community needs and ways that the State Library can help libraries meet those needs. Other groups expressed concern about how technology, in particular e-books, may influence library collection, services, and facilities. They want leadership, and participation in developing a new Plan.

Collaborative Summer Library Program and Youth Services

Six of the seven focus groups discussed the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) and Youth Services, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Collaborative Summer Library Program and Youth Services

Issue	Number of Focus groups
Positive value of CSLP to the library.	6
Maintains reading scores of children over the summer.	4

Public librarians in six of the seven focus groups (Portland did not discuss summer reading) gave high praise to the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP). Academic and school librarians were also supportive. As elsewhere in the report, verbatim quotes are enclosed with quotation marks; our transcriptions of comments are not. Comments included:

- "With the collaboration we now have quality materials with less work."
- "Materials are professional looking; better than we can do on our own."
- "We can just plug into the theme and use the resources."
- "We don't know what we would do without the CSLP."

We also asked the librarians to comment on the impact of the CSLP on Oregon residents and libraries. Comments included:

- Participants believed CSLP maintains or increases children's reading scores during the summer. "CSLP helps kids avoid the 'summer slump'." While there are only anecdotal studies from Oregon, a great deal of national research shows this. One librarian said that a teacher told her that she could tell which of the children in her class had participated in the summer reading program because their reading ability was maintained or increased over the summer.
- Because of the national collaborative, children from other Oregon libraries and even other states, find the collaborative theme and materials familiar. "We all wear the same t-shirts." They can continue their reading program in a distant library. This contributes to a national positive image of the library across the country.
- One grandmother reported to the librarian that she was impressed that her ex-son-in-law "actually" helped his son keep up his reading record in order to participate

successfully in the library's CSLP. This impressed both the grandmother and the ex-wife.

- "The CSLP saves our library money." Some said they would have no program without CSLP and many said they would probably do a program on their own but it would be more expensive, take time currently spent serving users, and probably not be of as high quality.
- The CSLP builds partnerships. One librarian said she takes books on the CSLP theme to free lunch sites, day-care centers, pre-school, and other sites, particularly where there are low-income families who may have limited access to other reading materials. Even if these children cannot participate fully in the CSLP, they can be exposed to it. Without the provided CSLP program materials, library staff would not have time to make these visits.
- Circulation and library use goes up in the summer. "In 2000, we had 11 children in our summer reading program; in 2011, we had over 400. We could not have done this without the CSLP." The public is very responsive to the program.
- One library reported a companion reading program for parents and grandparents who complete it with their children.

Suggestions

- Librarians in two focus groups suggested that OSL add a statewide storytelling and performance program component to enhance CSLP. One librarian said programming should be "turnkey" like the CSLP materials.
- Public libraries need to work more closely with schools to recruit students.
- One librarian expressed concern that the same children participated every year and suggested additional outreach to "get out of the library building" and bring in new families and children.
- Publicity should stress the value of summer reading programs to children's education.

There were equally positive, although fewer, comments about youth services consulting because fewer librarians had used it. Participants appreciated that the youth consultant represented Oregon on the Collaborative Summer Reading Program national committee and felt that she conveyed their concerns to the national committee. One librarian commented that she frequently called the youth consultant, who was always very helpful, and that her services were of particular use to rural libraries. Another rural librarian said she felt that the youth consultant provided "professional back-up" for her services to youth.

Those librarians who attended the Institute for Children and Youth rated it as very helpful. Comments included:

- Appreciation that the Institute shared both ideas and the research about why programs worked for children.
- Networking was invaluable.
- Cannot afford to send staff and asked if OSL could help pay expenses.
- More information from the Institute should be shared with those who cannot go.

Those libraries that received a visit from the youth consultant felt it made a difference in their service and some expressed a desired for her to make more visits.

There were several suggestions for a new initiative in youth services. Tthese are covered later in this report in the section about Potential Statewide Programs.

OSLIS

There were very few school librarians in the focus groups, and few of the participating public and academic librarians had used OSLIS. This may be why OSLIS was only discussed in three focus groups. Many focus group participants were not aware of OSLIS, what it does, or the website. In one focus group, one member from the host library brought in a computer to show the OSLIS website.

Those who had used OSLIS found the database access the most useful for students, with the citation-maker the second most useful. The focus groups may have occurred at an unfortunate time for OSLIS because several librarians reported that they had tried to use OSLIS, but the website was unavailable. Comments included:

- "OSLIS has been going down a lot. It's hard to get to the databases. If they want people to use it, it has to be stable."
- "OSLIS is virtually a school library with lesson plans and information literacy information. But databases are the most important."
- There should be more coordination with community colleges on information literacy.
- Train staff in Regional Educational Service Districts (ESD) to train teachers and library staff around the state. There are 21 ESDs, but only three have trained librarians. Increase cooperation with ESDs.

Continuing Education

Only three of the focus groups discussed continuing education (CE). While there was almost uniform support for continuing education and staff development in these groups, participants were divided on the role of OSL; the emphasis that should be placed on CE; and the continued benefit of the Northwest Central Database.

One rural group indicated they appreciated that OSL had increased its CE in the last few years with links to Web Junction, College of DuPage, and webinars, and noted that many competitive grants had a training component. Two groups wanted continuing emphasis on CE in the LSTA-funded statewide programs: L-net, databases, OSLIS, and any new programs. One focus group was very supportive of a more organized and aggressive CE program with leadership from both OSL and OLA. Comments included:

- Target CE to the areas of highest needs expressed in the "Continuing Education for Oregon Library Personnel: Needs Assessment Report and Proposed Model" prepared by Ruth Metz.
- Follow the model established by California's "InfoPeople": determine needs and design or contract for CE that meets those needs.
- Support for the Metz recommendation that the greatest need for CE was in rural areas.
- Work with OLA to deliver regional conferences.
- There are a lot of talented people in Oregon who could deliver CE.
- Archive CE as is done by InfoPeople so library staff can view at their convenience.
- Many obstacles in rural areas need to be overcome for a successful CE program: time, travel, cost, and substitute staffing.
- Pick a theme for CE and hire a "circuit rider" to deliver CE regionally on this topic.
- Increase training in areas of current statewide programs.
- Focus CE on what we want librarians to do well.
- Current training is under-utilized.
- Time to take webinars or attend workshops is limited.

One rural group felt that there were already sufficient CE opportunities and new efforts were not necessary. Another group said that OSL should not spend more funds than they are spending now.

While anecdotal comments about CE indicated a positive impact, no one reported that they evaluated the impact of CE. Participants reported that some workshops and webinars asked for immediate feedback on the value of the training, but no participants reported receiving a follow-up evaluation asking if they had used the training in their work.

In all the focus groups, only a few people indicated they had used the Northwest Central Database. One participant reporting viewing the site, but she did not follow up with registering for an offering. One said she had not found the CE activity she needed on the database.

<u>Plinkit</u>

Plinkit was discussed in four focus groups. Where it was discussed, small and rural librarians who had used it gave it high praise. Comments included:

- Easy to use.
- Provides a threshold website for those libraries without IT staff.
- Vision was uniformity; no matter where you are in the state, the websites look the same.
- Staff can be trained to make changes.
- "Keep it going, please!"
- "We would not have a website without it."
- "It gives our library a professional presence."

- "One of the best services the state offers."

Most participants from larger public libraries have their own websites and are not interested in Plinkit, which is currently not available to any other type of library.

A concern expressed in several groups is that Plinkit's technology is somewhat outdated. Two groups wondered if there is a better, more modern tool available. One librarian said Plinkit was "static." Another said that, while the format provides professional consistency, this consistency also lacks flexibility for local libraries. One librarian requested flexibility and customization options. Another said, "We are now more sophisticated users. We need consistency among the region's libraries, but need to integrate Web 2.0 user-generated information." In another group, there was discussion about making Plinkit available to school libraries and to include OSLIS as a link on the website.

The primary impact suggested for the Plinkit project was that it provided a professional image of the library to its users.

L-net

All seven focus groups discussed L-net, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: L-net

Issue	Number of focus groups
L-net should be evaluated to determine use and "bang for the buck".	4
Need more publicity about L-net.	4

We found participants were generally supportive of L-net, particularly in rural areas. More participants from urban libraries questioned the value received for the cost. Comments included:

Value of L-net

- Available 24-7.
- Provides real-time digital reference with direct online chat.
- Reference service is gone at small libraries and L-net fills the gap.
- "Because of L-net we can spend more time working with individual users."
- Provides a very professional service in small and rural libraries.
- "On our library's webpage and very heavily used."
- "Our patrons thank us for this service."
- People trust L-net to find a good source of information. "Can't trust web resources found through Google."
- "I like that L-net directs students to databases."

- "We have so few staff we have a difficult time covering the reference desk. L-net really helps us out."
- "With our small staff, L-net has a huge positive impact. It allows us to better serve our patrons."
- Truly statewide, serves all types of libraries.

Concerns about L-net

- There seems to be "cost creep." How do we control the costs and is it worth the increased cost? "What is the bang for the buck?"
- What is the cost per user?
- Seeing a rise in instant message services in libraries. Should L-net be upgraded to include Web 2.0? "We should be able to send PDFs to cell phones."
- Concerned that L-net is used primarily by children doing homework. It is not targeted to adults and business. Publicity should be targeted to more audiences.
- L-net local slows down the system because it is cluttered by local questions about hours and how to renew a book. Answering these questions takes time away from regular L-net users waiting with questions.
- OSL needs to look at: Who is being served? What is the total use? What is the cost per transaction? Then OSL should decide if it is worth continuing.
- "Our community college tried it and there was no student use."
- Need more training for para-professional library staff who don't know how to use L-net.
- Need more publicity about L-net. Local libraries should have a direct link on their website.
- Change the name. Nobody knows what it is.

One interesting opinion came from a librarian who did not use L-net. She said she felt it was unprofessional for her to use L-net to answer a reference question or to put it on her website because she could not afford the staff to answer questions for the entire state. She said she felt like a "leech" to use L-net and did not participate. Other members of the focus group assured her that the purpose of L-net was to answer reference questions for librarians and Oregon residents.

Another concern surfaced in the discussion of L-net about a possible impact on local library staffing if funding authorities discovered that Oregon residents could get questions answered through a statewide program. Would this impact local library staffing? One librarian said statewide programs like "L-net and databases are in competition with local libraries. We could succeed ourselves to death." In response, another participant said it would be "sad to deny service just to keep our doors open." Another said the message should be that the statewide services are an adjunct to local service.

Impact

All the information on L-net's impact was anecdotal. Many participants, particularly in rural areas, used and appreciate the service. Participants said L-Net saves staff time and

assists particularly where staff are untrained or few. As with other programs, participants asked for more data on amount of use. One participant wondered about the response to the pop-up survey. Another wanted to know the details of L-Net funding. Although no specific impact data emerged during the focus groups, some comments showed a perception that L-net had a positive impact on Oregon libraries and residents.

- "We analyze the transcripts and use the information to train our reference staff."
- "This is a positive step toward closing the digital divide."

Databases

There was tremendous support in all of the focus groups for state contracts for databases. All seven focus groups discussed databases at length. Topics of discussion are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Databases

Issue	Number of focus groups
Need EBSCO databases.	5
Opinions on usage, ask for analysis.	5
We would not have databases without these.	4
Need more PR.	4
Need more training.	4
When shift from EBSCO to GALE, had to change all training materials.	4
Equalizes service across the state.	4

Value of databases

Money

- Saves the library money.
- "We can't afford and we need more."
- Replaced our reference collection budget.
- "We were able to buy other databases, e-books, and non-fiction books. The savings really filled a need."
- "The price is right."
- Databases have replaced print references. "Our reference librarians use it every day."

Equality of resources and usage

- Like the common suite of databases available all across the state. "Equalizes all library access across the state."
- "A boon to small libraries, we would not have databases without them." School library budgets have been cut and they would not have databases without those from the state.

Other comments

- A school librarian reported she knew databases were successful when she saw students skipping Google and going straight to the databases for research.
- A public librarian reported she goes to schools without a school librarian and teaches the students how to use databases.

- Students transition to college easier because of the experience with databases in school and public libraries.
- Full text reference gets a lot of use. When staff is trained, they are more comfortable with databases and they make patrons comfortable with them as well.
- Helps the L-net and OSLIS projects.
- Several groups expressed satisfaction with Learning Express.

Issues

The two biggest concerns were the switch from EBSCO to Gale databases and the amount of advance time allowed to make the switch. The academic librarians were the most concerned with the change from EBSCO to Gale. They said that the EBSCO databases were of such importance to the academic library community that they had to continue these subscriptions with their own funds. One participant commented that the library had become dependent on one set of databases and the change to a new one affected many collection management decisions. Another participant asked for a longer comment time from the library community the next time the contract is negotiated.

The academic librarians were also the most concerned about the amount of time available to prepare for a change in the databases. The change occurred during the summer when academic libraries have fewer staff to manage changes in programs. The academic librarians were also more likely to have developed online or print tools to help students use the databases and they reported they did not have enough time to create new tools. One participant asked for at least double the lead time.

Some participants asked for additional flexibility and specificity in the selection of databases. A lengthy discussion in one of the focus groups included these comments:

- What criteria are used for choosing databases?
- "Why these titles? Would other titles be more useful to special groups in the state?"
- More databases that meet more library needs; have more full-text; and include more titles for business.
- Look at how content in databases benefits libraries and people.
- "Some databases don't have a lot of hits. Why does OSL keep subscribing to them?"
- Need to target more specific audiences such as career development.

One member of the group pointed out the contradiction in those comments; for example, the recommendation to buy more databases that meet the needs of specific groups conflicts with the comment to buy only databases that are heavily used. This person asked how OSL can purchase the databases that are best for the most people. There did not seem to be general awareness of the criteria used to select databases. This same focus group asked for an analysis of the return on investment for databases, looking particularly at how easy it is to find information, amount of full-text documents, profile of users, number of people who retrieve full-text, and so on.

Participants suggested more marketing of databases with suggestions including providing PR materials to local libraries; mounting a statewide campaign using billboards; and other mass media focusing on special groups, such as teachers. Many participants requested additional training in how to use the databases, for both librarians and the public. One librarian reported that his library had received an LSTA grant to prepare tutorials for database use. The tutorials were shared mainly with community colleges and received 95,000 visits to date. Participants from public libraries were not aware of these tutorials, asked why the results of this LSTA-funded grant had not been more widely shared, and asked how they could access the tutorials for their staff and users. Another participant commented, "Tutorials need to be simple, easy, short, quick, available any time, and kept up to date."

Other concerns included:

- Desire for a more flexible menu of databases to meet identified local needs.
- Fear that the state budget will be cut: "Databases are crucial; we would share the cost if we had to."
- Fear that local funding authorities will cut the local library budget since they are saving money on database contracts.
- Databases are hard to use. "We don't use them." Harder to use than Google.
- Make the databases more user friendly, like Google. "Users are overwhelmed by the complexity" of the databases.

Impact

Participants reported two primary impacts of databases. First, participants, particularly those from rural libraries, think that they could not offer these resources without the state's support. The second impact is the usage of the databases. Participants in several interest groups asked for additional information on usage. They had different opinions about who used the databases:

- Less use by public than students and librarians, need more training for public; underutilized in public libraries. "It takes time in a public library to learn how to use [databases] and make it comfortable."
- Geared more to public than academic libraries – not really robust enough for academic libraries.

<u>Competitive Grants</u>

All focus groups discussed competitive grants. A major theme in the discussion of competitive grants was the desire to have more sharing of the results of these grants, particularly training packages to allow replication of successful grants.

Many participants supported the concept of competitive grants although some participants questioned if the money could be better spent in statewide projects and asked what criteria

were used to decide priorities for LSTA programs. Categories of comments about competitive grants are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Competitive Grants

Issue	Number of focus groups
Value of LSTA grants to local libraries.	6
Need to share results of LSTA grants.	5
Percent of LSTA funding that should go to competitive grants. How to decide the priorities and allocation of LSTA.	5
Comments on the LSTA process for awarding grants.	5
Difficulty of small groups to apply for grants.	5

Perceived value of competitive grants

Participants in six groups indicated the reasons why they value competitive grants. They felt competitive grants allowed experimentation, innovation, and encouraged cooperation. Comments included:

- Allows experimental and innovative projects to occur.
- It's OK to experiment and fail.
- Encourages cooperation.
- Allows projects to get started outside of normal budget.
- LSTA funds can be used as leverage to bring in additional funding.
- Available statewide, an equalizer.
- Sharing statewide can enhance the value of a grant and spread the benefits to smaller libraries.
- Without competitive grants, where would innovative projects get funding?
- "Our library would not be automated without competitive grants."
- Competitive grants have been essential for district establishment.
- Sage was created with LSTA funds. "Sage has benefited our region."
- Grants would be easier if the grants were coordinated with the academic and K-12 calendar.

The need to share the results of LSTA grants

Five groups raised this as an issue. Participants believe the value of LSTA grants could be enhanced by systematic sharing of the results of LSTA grants, particularly those that were successful and that libraries could replicate. They agreed that many OLA programs featured successful LSTA projects; however, participants requested intentional sharing. They asked that OSL select programs to share and help libraries by providing guides for replication. The project about the database training tutorial discussed before in this report illustrates the need for wider sharing of results. Comments included:

- "We need to know best practices."
- Need an intentional effort by OSL to create a program or "showcase' at OLA.
- "Competitive grants should focus on variety, scalability, and replication. Should be replicable across the state."
- Need specific programs at OLA that show what can be replicated.
- Libraries need to know what is required to replicate a project.
- "State library's role should be to identify, publicize, and tell how to replicate."

Percent of LSTA funding supporting competitive grants

One set of participants felt that LSTA funds could better be spent on statewide programs. Another set felt that the competitive grants program was necessary and asked for OSL's criteria used in deciding the percentage of LSTA dollars for competitive grants and for statewide programs. Comments included:

- Competitive grants take money from statewide programs that benefit more libraries.
- "Should there be competitive grants at all? Shouldn't the money be used for all?
- What are the priorities for statewide projects if funds are reduced? What criteria will be used and what is the assessment of the most effective use of the money?

The LSTA grant award process

Participants made mixed comments on the LSTA process. Some participants reported that the process worked fine. Some believed that the process took too long or must be coordinated with school and academic library calendars. Participants praised the help of OSL in coaching people who were writing grants. A participant suggested that OSL make more of an effort to facilitate cooperative grants.

Participants identified a number of changes to make the process easier, such as more coordination with local calendars, and less paperwork intensive (see below for other ideas). Even though participants made these suggestions, they understand that grants have requirements attached to them by the federal government, which OSL may not be able to change. This understanding reflects the general good will that library workers have for OSL. Comments include:

- Process works fine.
- Earlier evaluation of grants could lead to more cooperation and collaboration between similar grants. Sometimes grants are given to one organization when collaboration would be better. An example was given of a digitization grant.
- The State Library does a good job of coaching people for grants.
- Short application is good, but some concern that evaluators are "uninformed when the grant writer thought it was clear." Might have an "oral review" to answer questions.
- Final proposal writing is time-consuming.
- "The paperwork was onerous! Staggering staff issue for a small library."

- Peer evaluation is very useful. "It helps the Commission know IMLS uses and purposes."
- "We need changes in the calendar, which requires planning way in advance of funding."

Difficulty of small and rural libraries to apply for grants

Some participants reported that small and rural libraries had more difficulty applying for LSTA grants than larger libraries, because small libraries have fewer staff experienced in grant writing and less time to write the grants. Some said that, despite these limitations, small and rural libraries could benefit from LSTA grants to larger libraries if they could be shown how to replicate the project. One suggestion was that OSL establish a special grant category for small libraries with a limited maximum award amount and minimal requirements. Only small and rural libraries could apply.

In addition to the five common themes, participants offered many additional comments about competitive grants. Many raised issues of concern, often about the process. Comments included:

- LSTA encouraged cooperation among libraries to work on projects and, in turn, that cooperative projects were a higher priority for OSL.
- The same libraries seem to get grants over and over.
- Sustainability is an issue. There is no real requirement for sustainability. When the grant is over, there is often no funding to continue it. How long should the state continue to fund a grant and what criteria should they use to do it? Database projects are not kept up to date. Grant staff leave and knowledge is lost. It would be difficult for OSL to require sustainability because sometimes you have to prove the worth of the project first.
- One participant wanted more information on how LSTA funds are spent and who is a repeat grantee, but was uncomfortable asking the question because of concern that OSL would think he was being critical. Would like more transparency.
- "We have never been asked how OSL should spend LSTA funds."
- Accountability an issue; OSL needs to follow-up on reports and peer evaluations; put activity reports on line
- Need to rethink criteria for grants, particularly about paying for staff. Need to look at need and expected outcome before denying staff
- A lot of money was used to try to create library districts but it failed. LSTA should be used for projects that will have a lasting impact.

Impact of competitive grants

There was no impact data available from participants on competitive grants. However, group members did raise some issues related to impact measurement.

- No training in how to assess grants.

- For research projects, it's difficult to know the impact for 2 or 3 years after the project, when there is no money for evaluation.
- No standard reporting.
- "We need data on ineffective statewide programs."

Most participants in the focus group, though appreciative of many competitive grants and their results, are open to using LSTA in ways that would carry out any state-wide projects identified in a long-range plan which, they said, must be based on a participative planning process. Although participants were open to the idea of centralizing LSTA funds to pay for statewide projects, most wanted some LSTA funds left in the competitive grants program.

Needs and Trends

One question asked of the focus groups was to identify the needs of Oregon residents and trends in Oregon's future. Issues identified included:

- Education- higher cost, less support, growth in distance learning.
- Privatization of government.
- The digital divide," have and have-nots" both by income and by experience with technology.
- E-government; "E-everything."
- Poverty and hunger.
- Changing demographics, particularly baby boomers aging.
- People without library service.

One concern was the impact of the closing of Oregon school libraries or staffing them with untrained library aides. Participants talked about this in a number of ways. First, they expressed concern about the education of children and their lack of information literacy skills. Second, they wondered about the future impact on colleges when these students reach college age. Third, public libraries are concerned about more immediate impact on their services.

Underlying the concern for school libraries is a worry about the public's view of the importance of libraries and librarians in general. Participants identified a concern that the public is unwilling to pay more taxes but at the same time, unwilling for any current services to be cut. The cost of education at the college level was also discussed.

Continuation of Statewide Programs

Only two groups addressed this directly and they felt that these programs should receive ongoing support from LSTA funding because of the benefit they provided across the state:

- Collaborative Summer Library Program and youth services
- OSLIS
- Plinkit

- L-net
- Databases

Although only two focus groups specifically advocated for assured funding, almost all the focus groups indicated positive opinions toward these programs. There was also a call for continued evaluation of the programs; assurance that they were indeed serving all libraries in the state or all types of libraries; and continued improvement in response to suggestions.

Potential New Statewide LSTA Programs

One of the final questions asked was if there were additional ideas for statewide programs that would benefit all libraries in the state or one type of library. A complete list of ideas suggested is presented in Table 6, followed by a discussion of the ideas mentioned by two or more groups.

Table 6: Potential new statewide LSTA programs

Issue	Number of focus groups
A statewide ILS	5
Statewide library card	4
Statewide E-book contract	4
Advocacy/Marketing	4
Broadband Equipment Deployment	2
Continuing Education	2
Enhanced children's programming	2

A Statewide ILS

This was mentioned by five groups. Four of the five suggested extending Sage statewide. One said that current Innovative Interfaces contracts were ending, so this was a good time to consider shifting to a statewide ILS. Participants in two groups explicitly said that they did not expect LSTA funding to pay all of the costs. They expect to cost share, but said that with the support of the state, libraries could still save money over current costs. Contracting IT support to a common vendor was also a very attractive idea to some participants. Several participants acknowledged the difficulty of picking one vendor or software that allowed searching across vendors.

A Statewide Library Card, Statewide Reciprocal Borrowing Card, a State Portal

The concept of wider access to libraries by Oregon's residents was mentioned by four groups. After more in-depth probing, the discussion about this topic became more nuanced. During the discussion, three groups expressed concern about Oregon residents who lived in an area that did not pay any taxes for library service. If they could use a library without having to pay taxes, what incentive is there for their community to

establish a new library or join an existing one? There was an added concern that communities currently supporting libraries might reduce funding if their residents could get free library service elsewhere. Thus the general conclusion is that reciprocal borrowing should be limited to an agreement between existing libraries supported with local taxpayer funds.

A State portal that provided access to services funded by LSTA, including L-net, databases, or OSLIS, was viewed a little differently. There was support that these projects were not necessarily tied to an individual library and that the federal taxes paid by Oregon residents helped to pay for them. However, participants from small libraries were concerned that these services, described as competition by one participant, would impact local funding. One participant said "Don't compete with local libraries," and another that the priority should be to strengthen local libraries.

Statewide E-book contract

Four groups asked OSL to negotiate a statewide E-book contract. Academic librarians said specifically that such a contract should make these books available to academic as well as public libraries. Some public librarians asked that the contract include interactive learning materials for children.

Advocacy and Marketing

Four groups suggested that the state library conduct an advocacy or marketing campaign. Participants in one group wanted the marketing targeted at encouraging communities without library service to join existing libraries. Other participants suggested that current statewide services be publicized, either directly through a statewide campaign, or by providing materials to local libraries to use. Yet another suggested that a campaign focus on benefits to the library user of unique information available, such as digitized historical collections.

Broadband Equipment Deployment, Continuing Education, and Enhanced Service to Children

Two groups supported each of these ideas for a statewide program.

Those supporting broadband equipment deployment asked for equipment to help them increase their broadband and provide better service to their users.

Continuing education was discussed in several groups. Those who supported the expansion of CE suggested that the report written by Ruth Metz be the basis of expanded continuing education throughout the state with an emphasis on rural libraries.

Finally, two groups advocated for a statewide initiative that focused on services to children and teens. They wanted databases that assisted teens, interactive learning programs for children, and another program similar to the Families Reading Together program.

Annex 1: Agenda for Focus Groups
Evaluation of Oregon LSTA Five-Year Plan

1. Introductions

2. Explanation of the evaluation project
    a. Purpose of Evaluation Project and focus groups
    b. Agenda
    c. Process agreements

3. Since 2008, the Oregon LSTA Plan has placed a high priority on awarding LSTA grants in seven areas. We'd like to have you talk about the impact those grants have had on library services in Oregon and on library users.
    a. Competitive grants to local libraries to allow them to conduct special projects
    b. Online, real time, reference service – L-Net
    c. A project to support student learning - OSLIS
    d. A project to help local libraries develop a local website – Plinkit
    e. A project to support services to youth through consulting, the Summer Reading Program, and the Institute for Children and Youth
    f. Online databases
    g. Continuing Education

    For each of these seven areas, we'd like you to address:
        i. What do you like about this program?
        ii. What would you change?
        iii. What is the impact of the program on libraries and library users?
        iv. How do you define and measure success in the program?
        v. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about this program?

4. Future
    a. What trends do you see impacting Oregon in the next five years?
    b. How can libraries address these trends?
    c. What do you need from the State Library to help you address these trends?

5. Some states use most or all of their LSTA dollars for statewide projects. Should Oregon use more of its money for statewide initiatives as opposed to competitive grants? Why or why not?

6. OSL is currently allocating LSTA funds for these statewide projects: L-net; OSLIS; Plinkit; Summer Reading and other youth programs; Databases. Are there other areas of library service that should be funded as statewide projects? If yes, which current projects or competitive grants might be funded less in order to fund a new project?