

# State Library of Iowa

## *Sustaining a State of Learners*

Highlights - January 1999 to November 2006

Libraries matter in Iowa. We are a state rich in libraries, with 543 public libraries; more than 80 college and university libraries; about 1000 school libraries and approximately 70 corporate libraries. Libraries enrich Iowa and support lifelong learning.

The State Library of Iowa actively champions libraries. Our two roles are improving library services in Iowa and delivering specialized information services to state government and to Iowans. Our mission is to advocate for Iowa libraries and to promote excellence and innovation in library services, in order to provide statewide access to information for all Iowans.

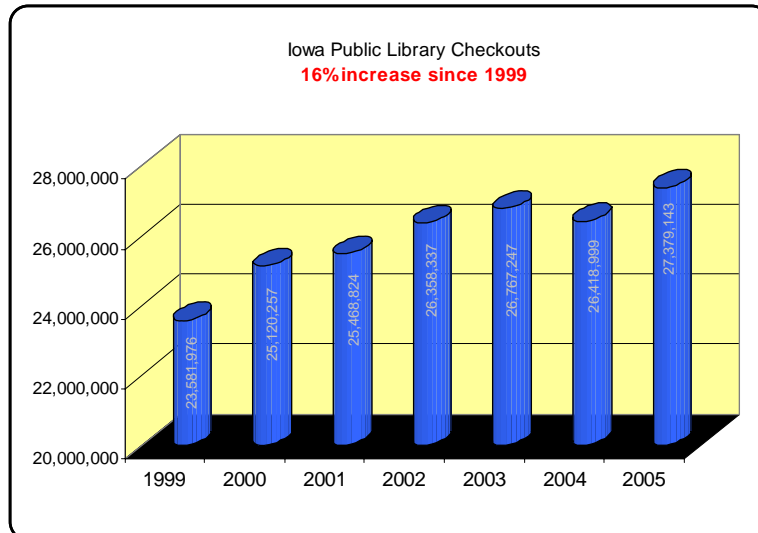
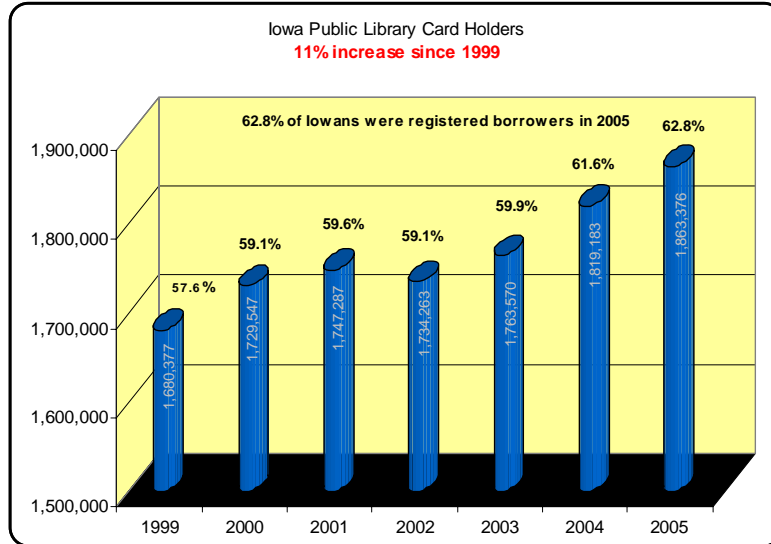
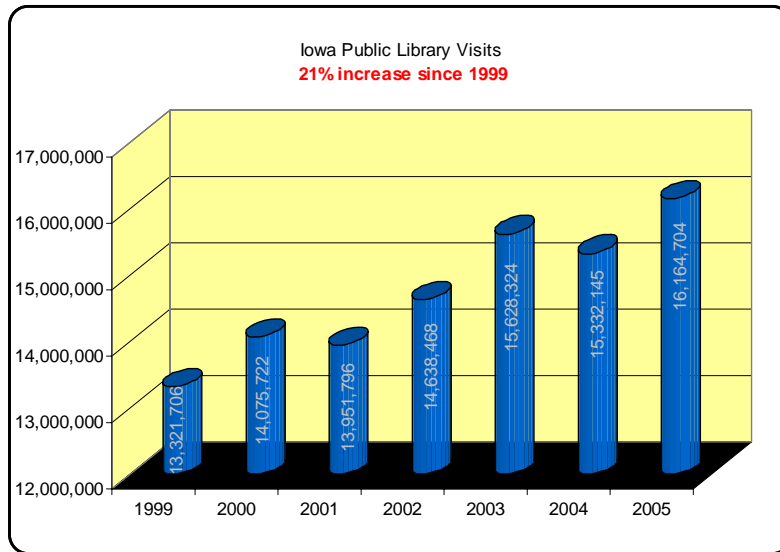


The State Library seeks to sustain a state of learners because lifelong learning is essential to individual success and to a democratic society. State Library support empowers Iowa libraries of all types to provide leadership and services to enhance learning in families and communities, to build 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, to sustain cultural heritage and to increase civic participation.

Since January 1999, the State Library has changed the library landscape in Iowa in several ways by:

- developing and administering the Enrich Iowa program which provides financial support to Iowa libraries;
- training public librarians and child care professionals in early childhood literacy development strategies, and providing a summer reading program to more than 125,000 young Iowans each year;
- initiating an annual statewide survey of school libraries and helping developing guidelines for Iowa school libraries;
- developing the Iowa Center for the Book and a statewide "All Iowa Reads" program;
- offering State Data Center services which publish value-added census data and assist Iowans in its use;
- making valuable e-library materials available to Iowans through Web sites of public libraries, colleges and the State Library itself;
- developing Web sites for 300 Iowa public libraries.

Iowans love and use their libraries. Since 1999, library visits to Iowa public libraries are up 21 percent, the number of public library cardholders is up 11 percent and the number of materials checked out rose 16 percent.



Source: Iowa Public Library Statistics, 1999-2005

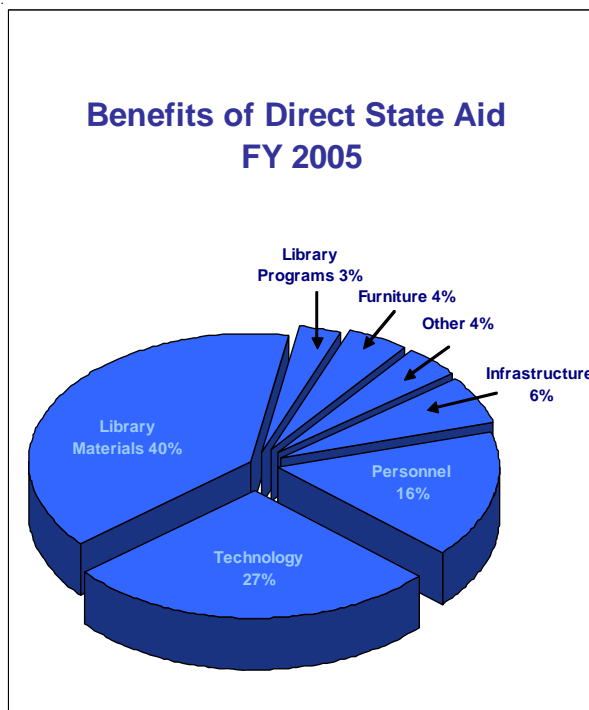
## The Enrich Iowa program supports Iowa libraries

Direct State Aid, a major part of the Enrich Iowa program, was created during Governor Vilsack's first year in office. Its purpose is to improve library services in Iowa; to reduce inequities in libraries' services among communities; to enhance, not replace, local funding; and to encourage the achievement of public library standards.

Direct State Aid was initially funded at \$700,000 in FY00. Annual funding for Direct State Aid has been \$1 million since FY01.

Total state funding for Iowa libraries through the Enrich Iowa program increased from \$1,351,790 in FY99 to \$2,648,982 in FY07.

The Enrich Iowa program is a proven success, with clear and positive results. Since 1999, the number of Iowa public libraries whose director is certified (better trained in library services) has increased 20 percent. The number of libraries whose collection is up to date has increased 27 percent. The number of libraries whose services to special population groups of all ages has increased 25 percent. The number of libraries open an adequate number of hours per week has increased 15 percent. The average increase from 1999-2005 in the number of libraries meeting each of the state public library standards is 17 percent.



***Since its inception, Direct State Aid led to a 70 percent increase in the number of accredited libraries in Iowa, from 171 in 1999 to 291 in FY06.***

In FY05, Direct State Aid funding helped 477 Iowa public libraries purchase books, computers and other necessities. The libraries reported spending 40 percent of the funding on library materials, 27 percent on technology, 16 percent on personnel, 6 percent on capital improvements and 11 percent on other needs.

Comments from some of the 477 Iowa public libraries which received Direct State Aid, a component of the Enrich Iowa program:

"We have a young man with multiple sclerosis who is in a motorized wheelchair. If you could

see the smile on his face when he is able to find a video he has been wanting to watch, you would know how much this extra funding means to our library."

"Currently we have only one computer with internet access for our patrons and there is usually a waiting list to use it. Enrich Iowa will allow us to offer more computers with internet access and will improve library services in our community greatly."

"These funds make it possible for the library to [buy] reference materials that the library is unable to purchase with our regular materials budget. State aid funds make a big difference and make fulfilling requests more timely. The funds also make a big difference in the quality of children's programs."

"We have a family with an autistic child who are regular patrons. We were able to purchase books for children and adults to help them understand autism. The parents have been able to provide these books to his class and teachers to help make school a more comfortable

experience for him. As a small town with a small budget, this would not have been possible without Enrich Iowa funding."

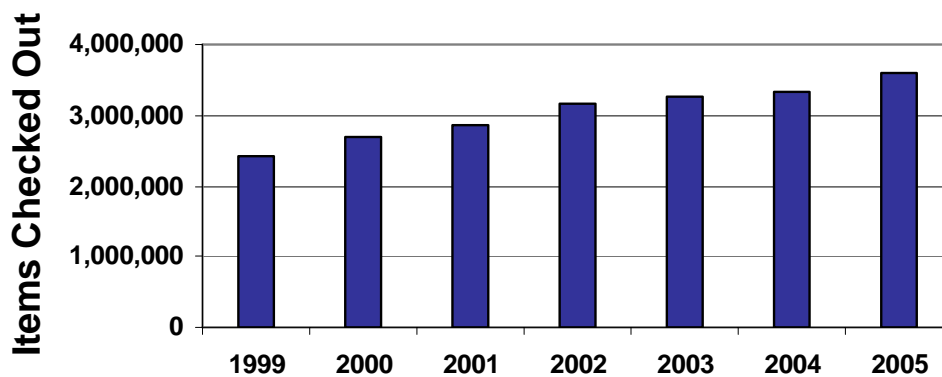
"The library can provide better service to Bosnian and Asian immigrants (with English as Second Language materials) and they are better able to contribute to the community. Young people who could not find ESL books in the schools were able to have their needs met at their public library thanks to Enrich Iowa funds."

"Although our city lost revenue due to funding cuts, Enrich Iowa has allowed us to remain open 65 hours a week. Without this money, we would have lost an employee who provides public service."

The Enrich Iowa program also includes Open Access and Access Plus.

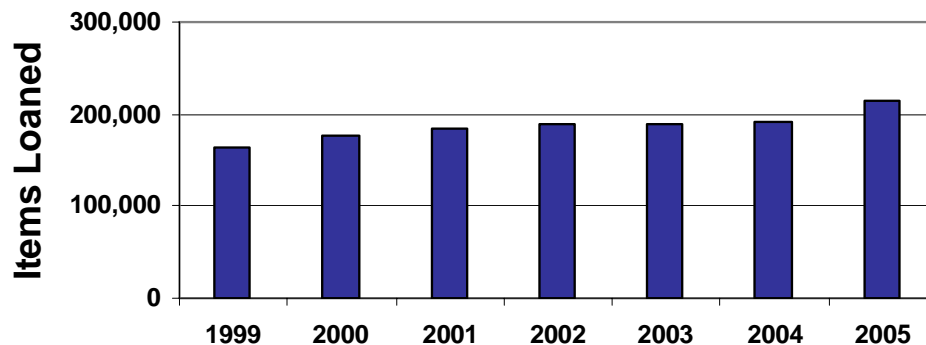
Open Access allows Iowa library customers from a participating library to check out library materials at all other participating libraries in the state. Since 1999, the number of items checked out each year has increased 49 percent from 2,417,101 to 3,595,408.

## Open Access



Libraries are reimbursed a part of the cost of mailing materials to other libraries through the Access Plus interlibrary loan program, which provides Iowans with equal access to library resources no matter where they live. Since 1999, the number of items borrowed annually has increased 30 percent from 164,363 to 213,900.

## Access Plus



## Early Childhood Learning

For years, the State Library has been deeply involved in early childhood learning through its work with Iowa's 543 public libraries, and other organizations and agencies.

- Beginning in 2003, the State Library developed and has taught a curriculum especially for public librarians on early childhood literacy development. Approximately 230 librarians attended the initial overview sessions on early literacy. Follow-up workshops have been held to support individual strategies from the early literacy curriculum. Approximately 250 Iowa public librarians have participated in some or all of the follow-up training sessions.

Liz Trippler of the Shenandoah Public Library used her training to work with parents who have children enrolled in Headstart.

*"I tell at-risk parents that they may not be able to change their life circumstances, but they can improve the future for their children. That reading to them every day and talking with them about what they read will change their world," said Trippler. "When a mother at a Headstart parent meeting said she reads to her children every day because it makes them feel good, I knew that her children were going to reach their full potential."*



- Each year, the State Library provides a theme, curriculum, resource materials and training for public library staff for their summer library programs. More than 500 public libraries attend the training sessions and offer a summer library program each year. These programs are intended for preschoolers through high schoolers. **Almost 127,000 Iowa youth participated in a summer reading program at their public library in 2005.**

- The State Library of Iowa has been a stakeholder and regular participant since the beginning of Early Childhood Iowa, a group of committed advocates dedicated to developing a comprehensive system of programs and services for Iowa's children ages zero to five.
- The State Library of Iowa partnered with the Iowa Department of Education to offer "Building Blocks to Early Literacy" in spring 2004, a two-day conference for early child care providers, librarians, educators and others who work with preschool children.
- The State Library is part of the "Every Child Reads: Ready to Read" work team (2000 to present) at the Iowa Department of Education. The State Library youth services consultant, along with DE consultants, provided "train the trainer" sessions to almost 500 people.
- Since 2000, the State Library has partnered with IPTV to train librarians to work with parents on early literacy development skills. Recently, librarians in 14 public libraries hosted training sessions for preschool parents on story telling.
- In 2004, the State Library planned and presented six statewide educational sessions featuring a noted early childhood language consultant on "Linking Language and Literacy Learning." More

than 600 people attended these sessions, including librarians, preschool teachers, AEA consultants, child care providers, and other who work with young children.

- In 2006, the State Library began to train public librarians to do parent training in their local communities to get children “ready to learn.” So far, 60 librarians have been trained.

- “Kids First,” a youth services conference sponsored by the State Library and held in 2001, 2003, and 2005 provided national keynote speakers on early literacy.

## Teacher Librarians and School Libraries

On June 1, 2006, Governor Tom Vilsack signed HF2792 which requires each Iowa school district to have a qualified licensed teacher librarian. The legislation also requires the State Board of Education to define and establish guidelines for school library programs in kindergarten through grade 12.

State Librarian Mary Wegner and State Library Youth Services Coordinator Mary Cameron are on a committee appointed to draft the guidelines and prepare technical assistance for school libraries. The committee will submit their recommendations to the Board of Education by December 2006.



*Dale Vande Haar, Judy Jeffrey, Mary Wegner, Kristin Steingreaber, and Sandy Dixon were present when the Governor signed HF2792.*

**Ongoing assessment for improvement is essential to the vitality of an effective school library program.** In 2001, a research project was conducted on school libraries. The information netted by the project became the basis for an annual survey of all Iowa school libraries that began in 2002. Iowa became the first state to embark on such an endeavor.

The research project and subsequent surveys have determined that strong school library programs must:

- Be adequately staffed, stocked and funded
- Have staff who are involved leaders in the school
- Have staff who collaborate with classroom teachers
- Embrace networked information technologies

A large drawback to meeting these and other goals was the lack of teacher librarians in Iowa schools. In 1995, language in the Iowa Code requiring school librarians in each building was dropped. Since 1996, the number of full-time teacher librarians has fallen 27.7 percent, a reduction of 195 positions. **In the 2006-07 school year, 82 school districts do not have school librarians.**

## The Iowa Center for the Book

In 2002, the State Library was officially recognized as Iowa’s Center for the Book by the U.S. Library of Congress. The mission of the Iowa Center for the Book is to stimulate public interest in books, reading, literacy and libraries. Current projects include:

The “**All Iowa Reads**” committee began in 2003 with the purpose of selecting a book that all Iowans could read and talk about during the year. Hundreds of libraries and other local organizations plan programs throughout the year to talk about the selection. Books have included *Peace*

*Like a River* (2003), *Niagara Falls All Over Again* (2004), *The Master Butchers Singing Club* (2005), *Gilead* (2006) and *Splendid Solution: Jonas Salk and the Conquest of Polio* (2007).

**“Letters About Literature”** invites readers in grades 4 through 12 to take part in a national reading and writing contest. Iowa began participating in the contest in 2004. Since then, over 2,800 Iowa students have taken part in the program. To enter, readers write a personal letter to an author explaining how his or her work changed their view of the world or themselves. **In 2005, Edward Chen, Ames, Iowa, (photo right) was a national winner.** Chen and his family were treated to a trip to Washington, DC where he read his letter during the National Book Festival. Iowa had a national semifinalist in 2004 and 2006. As the National Letters About Literature Program Director Catherine Gourley emphasizes, “Students who read, write better; students who write, read more. Research supports this reading-writing link. Letters About Literature fosters this link as well as personal reader responses.”



## State Data Center Program

The State Data Center program is a cooperative program with the U.S. Census Bureau to increase the availability of census data in Iowa and to help people use it. Staff answer questions from data users and maintain an extensive Web site of information about Iowa’s population, housing, businesses, and government. The State Data Center publishes statistical profiles and maps about Iowa’s population, creates customized data tabulations, advises data users on the appropriate uses of data, and presents workshops and programs to help data users find and use data and to understand Iowa population trends.

The State Data Center’s customers use its information:

- To inform public policy (e.g., the number of children living in housing units built before 1950 at risk for lead paint poisoning);
- to improve communities (e.g., the number of persons with mobility limitations who would benefit by installing an automatic door at a polling place);
- for economic development (e.g., the characteristics of customers within a 5-mile radius of a business);
- for public safety (e.g., the number of people within the evacuation area of a plant);
- for cultural enrichment (e.g., the mix of ancestries in a community).

The number of data files on the State Data Center’s Web site has more than doubled between FY02 (the first year for which statistics are available) and FY06, and activity on the site has more than tripled, with annual Web site usage now around a half million hits each year.

## E-Library Resources for Iowans

### **EBSCOhost**

Since 2003, the State Library has provided Iowans with access to EBSCOhost, a Web-based information resource that includes full text magazines, newspapers and reference tools. A partnership between the State Library and the Area Education Agencies provides a seamless network of online information through Iowa’s public, college and school libraries. **More than 95 percent of the state’s population is served by public libraries that have access to EBSCOhost.**

What librarians have said about EBSCOhost:

- "Iowans are lucky to have a State Library that provides databases like EBSCOhost. It makes sure all Iowans are fairly served."

Director of the Forest City Public Library

- "Thanks to the State Library of Iowa for supporting and making EBSCOhost available via remote access. It is an informative research tool. Over the last several days I have accessed numerous research materials and the opportunity to dig deeper into the journal research."

Director of Library Services, Hawkeye Community College

- "There's simply nothing like it for those of us who cannot afford to subscribe to all of the journals. We appreciate it!"

Director of the Kalona Public Library

- "Our patrons have high praise for the addition of EBSCOhost to our library. All have made comments about how much faster they get their work finished."

Director of the Milford Public Library



### Iowa Publications Online

The State Library of Iowa and Iowa Technology Enterprise collaborated to produce Iowa Publications Online (IPO), a permanent archive where the public can find digital state documents produced by state agencies. **There are currently more than 3,500 documents from over 150 state agencies posted.** Iowa is one of only a handful of states that collects and makes digital information available in this way. In FY06, IPO had more than 445,000 Web hits. An added bonus: This information will be permanently available in the future.



### HealthInIowa

HealthInIowa is a Web site maintained by the State Library that offers Iowans a timely, simple and trustworthy resource for consumer health information. **Since its inception in 2000, the Web site has been accessed more than a half million times.**



HealthInIowa provides a single consumer health Web site that combines national, state, regional, and local resources, improving access not only to printed information but also to agencies, organizations, and services that can help consumers meet their health information needs. It gives Iowans reliable information to answer their health-related questions.



## Putting Libraries on the Web (Plow) Project

Iowa libraries want to be where their customers are and increasingly their customers are on the Web. A generous grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is making it possible for the State Library to provide Web sites, e-mail accounts and technical support to Iowa public libraries.

The original target for the project was 100 libraries, but an astounding 300 signed up for training.

Through the PLOW project – Putting Libraries on the Web - libraries will have Web sites preloaded with a variety of local information specific to each library, including links to local catalogs, location, hours, contacts, and trustees. Library customers will also have access to state-wide e-library resources through their local library's Web site. As library staff members are trained and become comfortable with their library's Web site, they will be able to add their own content.



Participating libraries will also receive technical support provided by a full-time computer / technical support person available to public libraries by phone and e-mail. Starting this fall and continuing into 2007, training will be provided on Introduction to Directory and E-mail Services, Getting Your Web Site Started, Customizing Your Web Site, and more.

Training has already begun and the Web sites will go live in spring 2007. Comments from librarians:

**"Thanks to the State Library for applying for the grant and helping all the public libraries create web pages. We definitely need and appreciate the help and the foresight of the State Library, and the commitment and support of the Gates Foundation!"**

**"I'm so excited about the PLOW project--what a wonderful opportunity!!"**

**"We are looking forward to all the PLOW project offers to our small library."**