When seeking funding for additional programs, special projects, expanded library services, etc., the Library Services and Construction Act (LSCA) grant monies should be considered. All fifty states are entitled to LSCA funds. Each may administer the funds a little differently; however, certain requirements are to be met by all. These include the following:

1. a state must submit a state plan of action;
2. each state must submit a five year program; and
3. each state must review and amend where necessary its approved state plan, review and revise its five year program and submit an annual program list of its projects (Corry, 1982, p. 65).

The U.S. Congress authorizes library legislation and appropriates funds for library services through the Library Services and Construction Act. These funds are allocated to the states by the U.S. Department of Education (Illinois State Library Staff, 1984, p. 4). This agency requires the state to fulfill the aforementioned obligations to obtain LSCA monies (the specific regulations for the Library Services and Construction Act may be found in volume 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations, chapters 74, 75, 76 and 77) (Illinois State Library Staff, 1984, p. 4).

The LSCA grant process is divided into three title programs. Each title program has specific guidelines/objectives for the grantee to adhere to when applying for funding.

Title I funds have been used to purchase library materials such as books and equipment. It may also be used for salaries, other operating expenses, for the administration of start plans, and for strengthening the capacity of state library administrative agencies to meet the needs of the people of the state (Corry, 1982, p. 66). These funds are not intended for private or special library use but rather for use by public libraries which serve all of the public (Corry, 1982, p. 64).
As a side note, it should be brought to your attention that currently the Illinois State Library is being asked by the U.S. Department of Education to return $15 million of LSCA funds which was not specifically used by “public libraries which serve all of the public.” The Illinois State Library supports multitype library systems. This means that private and public, academic, high schools, and special libraries are encouraged to become full participating members of Illinois Library Systems that are multitype. Those multitype systems that have received LSCA funding for interlibrary cooperation, delivery, resource sharing, etc. have technically extended the intent of LSCA funding which again was to be used “for public libraries which serve all the public.”

Although the U.S. Department of Education in no way accuses the Illinois State Library of using the funds for frivolous acts or specified misconduct, and indeed have agreed the funds were used to support effective and creative library services within the state, the fact that the LSCA funds were not directed only for use by “public libraries which serve all the public” has prompted the U.S. Department of Education to request a refund of the allocated funds. This matter is still pending and awaiting a final resolution.

A library grant submitted specifically for Title I funds must address one or more of the following seven objectives to be considered:
1. The extension of public library services to areas without such services.
2. The improvement of such services in areas where such services are inadequate.
3. Making library services more accessible to persons who, by reason of distance, residence, or physical handicap, or other disadvantage, are unable to receive the benefits of public library services regularly made available to the public.
4. Adapting public library services to meet particular needs of persons within the state, including the needs of persons in state institutions.
5. Strengthening major urban resource libraries (public libraries).
6. Improving library services to persons with limited English-speaking ability or with literacy needs.
7. Providing service through community information and referral centers (Illinois State Library Staff, 1984, p. 4).

Any public library in a system, or a system, or other library-related group may apply for a Title I grant (Illinois State Library Staff, 1984, p. 4).

Title II LSCA funds are intended for “construction of new buildings and acquisition, expansion, remodeling and alteration of existing buildings, and may be applied for by any public library or System” (Illinois State Library Staff, 1984, p. 4). Matching fund requirements for Title I and II were located via amendments to LSCA in 1977. Any federal funds
expended for the administration of the LSCA act must be equally matched by state or other nonfederal funds (Corry, 1982, p. 66).

A single entity, two or more types of libraries in a system, or a system may apply for a Title III grant to plan, establish, expand, and operate cooperative networks of libraries and to plan for statewide resource sharing (Illinois State Library Staff, 1984, p. 4). Purchase of materials such as books are not fundable under the Title III grant act.

Before the actual grant proposal is written, the author must assess the needs of his/her library and community needs. Certain questions must be addressed such as how many patrons will this grant benefit, how will fulfillment of this grant improve library service to patrons, etc.? If the intent of your proposal is interagency cooperation, then cooperative planning and grant writing is necessary.

Once a determination is made on the part of the grantee as to which Title program they wish to apply to for LSCA funding, they should contact their state library or library system to ensure following the proper procedures in the application request. In most cases the information required for local funding and/or contributions would be required in the application of an LSCA grant. This includes one or more of the following concerns:

— an abstract of the project;
— a statement of philosophy or need;
— a statement of purpose for the project specifying the origins and support for its implementation;
— goals and objectives for the project including a timeline;
— procedures for the project’s implementation;
— an evaluation of the project with specific regards to the goals and objectives that were sought;
— a budget which includes in-kind support;
— letter of support (Klish et al., pp. 37, 49, 75).

The author of a proposal should meet all the aforementioned components of a grant with their own writing style and delivery. This makes the proposal uniquely theirs. For the sake of the reviewer, no two grant submissions should be exactly alike in style and composition because the lack of creativity expressed may indeed be interpreted as a lack of creativity toward the proposed project. Therefore, when submitting a grant proposal, let it reflect the excitement and influence that is felt toward the fulfillment of the project.

One of the priorities in the LSCA Title I program is the programming of library service to disadvantaged persons who might not otherwise have access to such service (Corry, 1982, p. 67). In the past the term disadvantaged has been defined to include native Americans, blacks, foreign speaking citizens, and, more recently, senior citizens, rural farm workers, and
youth (in particular, two categories of youth—preschoolers and young adults).

More and more grants are being submitted to initiate programs that will serve these "unserved." These programs will test the flexibility of the proposal for continued funding on behalf of the grantee's library in subsequent years.

Again, when seeking funding for additional programs, special projects, expanded library services, etc. the Library Services and Construction Act grant monies are available as an alternative to private and/or local sources of funding. A serious applicant should contact their state library or library system for complete grant funding information.

NOTES