



NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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TSLAC receives Opportunity Online grant from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

AUSTIN, Texas – The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) is pleased to announce it has received a Texas Opportunity Online grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to improve broadband Internet connections in Texas public libraries. The \$192,000 grant will allow TSLAC to help eligible libraries install high-speed Internet connections and provide technical support and training so that every library can meet its community's connectivity needs.

"In some communities, libraries provide the only freely available technology lifeline; high-speed transmission is essential to facilitating information access and exchange in this age of instantaneous communication," said Peggy D. Rudd, Texas State Library and Archives Commission director and librarian. "So many users rely on library-based Internet access as a gateway to economic, educational and social opportunity, but without an adequate conduit, their ability to meet these basic needs is stifled."

Last year, the Gates Foundation supported the Texas Opportunity Online Broadband Summits held Oct. 8 and Nov. 18 and 19, 2009, to assess Texas libraries' connectivity needs and discuss solutions. Among those speaking were library futurist Stephen Abram and Graham Richard, former mayor of Fort Wayne, Ind., home of one of North America's top-rated library systems.

The Gates Foundation grant will help provide library administrators with tools to sustain and improve connectivity, including technical support and training in using financial resources such as the Federal Communications Commission's E-rate program, which offers discount telecommunications goods and services. Texas was one of seven states invited to participate in the foundation's Opportunity Online broadband grant program.

Henry Stokes, TSLAC technology consultant and state E-rate coordinator, is responsible for administering the Opportunity Online broadband grant program.

ABOUT THE BILL & MELINDA GATES FOUNDATION

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Wash., the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and co-chair William H. Gates Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. Learn more at www.gatesfoundation.org or join the conversation at [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

ABOUT THE TEXAS STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES COMMISSION

Formed in 1909, TSLAC is committed to giving Texans access to information and programs they can use to improve their lives and communities. We provide history and genealogical search assistance, federal and state government documents, electronic research and library services to all Texans, including those who are unable to read standard print material because of physical or reading disabilities. For more information, visit www.tsl.state.tx.us.

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