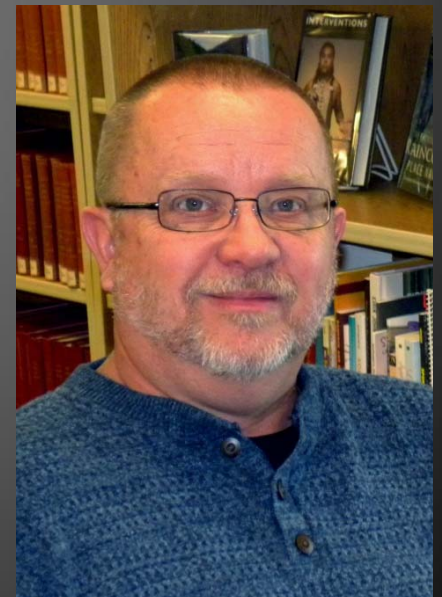


# Hard Times in WA Libraries

Responding to needs when usage is up and budgets are down



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# Washington's Need

We polled the state's directors, asking them how we could best help

## Directors' most common challenges:

- Patrons have limited time at computers
- Reference staff are over-worked
- Hour and budget cutbacks further limited library staff



***“Compiling online resources for libraries to access in one place”*** was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most requested support, closely following a potential partnership with WA State Employment Security or WorkSource.

# Our Response



**Immediate:** Form task force to create online Hard Times Resource Guide

**Next:** Plan grant cycle to deliver much needed funds to strapped communities

**Ongoing:** Conduct online and in-person training, including librarians helping job-seekers

**Target:** vulnerable populations in the state, especially the unemployed and job-seeking

# Hard Times Resource Guide

Check it out at <http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/hardtimes/>

## Hard Times Resource Guide

Resources compiled by the State Library to help you navigate and succeed in a tough economy



### Finances & Money Management

Get help with bill-paying, credit management, banking, taxes, and more.



### Employment & Job-Seeking

Hunt for jobs, get tips on resume-building and interviews.



### Health & Sustenance

Find insurance, deal with family stress, and get help to pay medical bills.

New: Cold Weather Resources!



### Housing & Homelessness

Mortgage and foreclosure help, homelessness assistance, and affordable housing.



### Family & Parenting

Resources for insurance, college costs, family nutrition, and parenting.



### Education & Training

Resources for training, education, and to learn basic skills.



### Seniors

Senior housing, financial assistance, health resources and more.



### Veterans

Veteran housing, jobs, insurance and more.



### Leisure & Entertainment

Find entertainment and leisure activities with little to no cost.



### Volunteers / Get Involved

Get involved and help out by lending a hand in your community.



### Disabled / Special Needs

Resources specifically allocated for disabled or special-needs individuals.



### En Español

Resources for Spanish-speaking residents.



# Focused, Online Help

Patrons have limited time at computers.

- Includes selective, not comprehensive lists. We wanted to avoid information overload
- Layout is very easy to navigate. Users can quickly jump to the section they need.
- Customized queries allow searching only within our resources.



# Renew Washington Grants

- Offered targeted LSTA-funded competitive Hard Times grant opportunity to Washington libraries
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation offered to match the funding to provide additional grants for public libraries, and Renew Washington was born
- WSL awarded a total of \$644,000 to 17 public libraries and 3 academic libraries as part of the Renew Washington Grant Cycle



# Renew WA Libraries are...



- Expanding their education/job information collections
- Purchasing ResumeMaker software
- Improving staff skills so they can lead patrons directly to needed resources
- Featuring a speaker's series of well-regarded experts in the field of career transition and placement
- Holding classes on job-hunting computer skills

# Training and Peer Learning

**Trainings were offered to library staff** in Washington that related to helping patrons during the economic downturn; trainings provided primarily by Amigos and BCR

**Peer Learning** (Gates Foundation Grant) trained WSL staff in peer learning techniques and online facilitation and will engage Renew Washington sub-grantees in peer learning online





# Outcomes



Our Resource Guide has had almost **8,000 visitors** with **17,677 page views**.

You and your staff deserve many thanks for securing additional funding for the Hard Times grant cycle. I very much appreciate the initiative, creativity, and hard work that must have gone in to making this happen. –**Eileen, Everett, WA**