

To: Montana State Library Commission
From: NTF Gates Staying Connected Grant Application Review Committee --
Heidi Sue Adams, Mary Anne Hansen, Lyn McKinney & Karen Strege
Re: Recommendations for funding projects
Date: April 16, 2004

Three members of the NTF Gates Grant Application Review Committee met in Helena on April 14, 2004, to review and discuss 60 applications received from public and branch libraries. Karen joined the Committee for part of the meeting by telephone conference.

The applications received requested funding for 67 libraries/branches in the amount of nearly \$280,000. The Staying Connected Grant has a total of \$173,720 to be awarded for these upgrade projects.

Several priority criteria were used in working through the applications: poverty levels, requests for connectivity upgrades, current number of public access computers, need for replacement computer equipment, etc. The Committee was also concerned with geographic locations and considered libraries in more isolated areas to probably have the greatest burden to provide public access computer services for their communities.

The Committee makes the following recommendations for the Commission's consideration:

1. Recommend approval of 54 projects for full or partial funding. The attached table presents details about each of the 60 proposed projects and indicates which projects are being recommended for funding and at what amounts. The 6 projects not being recommended are Big Timber, Billings, Bozeman, Drummond, Helena, and Kalispell.
2. Recommend holding the \$2,350 not awarded at this time to use for unanticipated costs if needed after the projects are underway.
3. Recommend that if money is available, the first alternate project to be funded is Big Timber.

To summarize, the Committee is recommending funding for 57 libraries. The recommended projects include 5 connectivity upgrades and a total of 115 new computers, 107 to replace outdated equipment and 8 to place additional public access computers in libraries.