



# Jesse White

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## SECRETARY OF STATE

# NEWS

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Illinois State Library Obtains Grant From Gates Foundation For Statewide Web Based Training Initiative**

**SPRINGFIELD** — Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White announced that the Illinois State Library has received a Public Library Training Grant totaling \$201,750 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation U.S. Library Program to develop a much-requested, statewide Web based training program for Illinois librarians. The program will eventually make universal Web based training available to all Illinois citizens.

White said the grant would allow the State Library to transform a small pilot project known as LibraryU (<http://www.libraryu.org/>) into an Illinois program called LibraryU Reloaded. The LibraryU Reloaded program will be a source of ongoing training for Illinois librarians, and is designed to become a training model for other states. Eventually, LibraryU Reloaded would allow all Illinois citizens to have universal access to Web based training.

"If Illinois librarians can enhance their knowledge and skills by obtaining this multi-faceted training, the result will be improved library service for patrons," White said. "Evaluations conducted by the State Library repeatedly show interest by librarians in obtaining more technology and Web based training."

White said LibraryU Reloaded will be ideal for offering librarians equal access to Web based training, because users can access the program in a variety of ways. Participants will be able to access the training modules on their work computer, at home, at one of six geographically convenient Gates Training Labs in Illinois, at the Illinois State Library Training Lab, or at one of the 531 Illinois public libraries participating in the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation State Partnership Program. Though the initial focus of the program will be public libraries, employees of Illinois academic, school and special libraries will also have access to the Web based training modules. Perhaps most importantly, LibraryU Reloaded is

designed to eventually allow all 12 million Illinois citizens to have universal access to Web based training.

"Web based training is especially convenient to library staff in small and rural libraries because it does not necessitate travel, and staff working in one person libraries will not have to close their buildings to attend training" White said. "Thanks to the computers and other technology awarded last year through the Gates State Library Partnership Program, Illinois libraries are much better equipped with computers and boast greatly improved Internet access."

According to White, the initiative calls for development of 50 training modules in such areas as Microsoft Office applications, computer based library publications, basic computer troubleshooting, legal issues such as copyright concerns and web page design. The State Library envisions LibraryU experts teaching 75 percent of public library staff in Illinois to use one or more of the training modules. The program will be promoted to 5,000 Illinois public library staff. Training will be available beginning in January 2004.

"The Illinois State Library envisions LibraryU Reloaded as a dramatic paradigm change, delivering innovative Web based learning opportunities to all Illinois libraries, their staff and their users," White said. "These new learning opportunities can be accessed anytime, anywhere, at no cost, no matter how many times users repeat modules. LibraryU Reloaded is an investment in the future of Illinois public libraries and the sustainability of public access computing in Illinois."