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Serra Cooperative Library System Receives National Grant Award To Recruit Librarians to Serve San Diego and Imperial Counties

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San Diego, Calif. – June 24, 2009 – Serra Cooperative Library System, serving San Diego and Imperial Counties, was selected to receive a Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program grant award from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the primary source of federal support for the nation’s libraries and museums. The \$708,138 grant will allow Serra to partner with the School of Library and Information Science (SLIS) at San Jose State University to recruit and educate a new generation of librarians who will serve California’s two counties bordering Mexico.

- Brawley Public
- Camarena Memorial
- El Centro Public
- Imperial County Free
- Imperial Public
- Carlsbad City
- Chula Vista Public
- Coronado Public
- Escondido Public
- National City Public
- Oceanside Public
- San Diego County
- San Diego County Public Law Library
- City of San Diego Public

The three-year project, *Preparing Librarians to Serve Diverse Communities Along our Nation’s Border*, will address the challenges currently faced by Serra’s 14 public library systems, as they struggle to fill a growing number of vacant librarian positions with individuals who enjoy serving the area’s multicultural and multilingual population and who reflect the community’s rich diversity. Future librarians will be recruited from the pool of 750 paraprofessionals who already staff Serra libraries. They will receive scholarships, mentoring, and other support as they earn their Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) degree and prepare to transition to professional positions.

In addition to the partnership with SLIS, Serra’s leaders will collaborate with the Desert Valley Library Media Association and LIBROS, San Diego’s Chapter of REFORMA, to create a supportive environment for a distributed group of MLIS students, spread across the two counties, helping them balance family and work responsibilities with the demands of a graduate program delivered through distance learning.

All employees of Serra libraries will benefit from local educational events and networking opportunities, which will expand their understanding of how libraries can meet the needs of diverse populations. Additionally, local career fairs will encourage individuals to consider a career in librarianship. For more information about the project please contact Vera Skop: 619 232 1225, vskop@serralib.org.

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About Serra Cooperative Library System The Serra Cooperative Library System (www.serralib.org) is comprised of 14 public library systems that serve the communities of San Diego and Imperial Counties in California. They include two large systems, each with over 30 branches, as well as small libraries with one location or with branches that have a single employee. Together, Serra libraries serve their communities at nearly 100 different locations. Serra associate members include a community health library, a public law library, three libraries that serve local military bases, a library at a correctional facility, and a local community college that offers a library technician program. Serra's mission is to help member libraries provide expanded resources and improved services at reduced costs.

About the San Jose School of Library and Information Science The School of Library and Information Science at San Jose State University (<http://slisweb.sjsu.edu>) offers the world's largest accredited master's degree program in Library and Information Science, with more than 2,800 graduate students. Students who are interested in pursuing a career in electronic records management enroll in the School's Master in Archives and Records Administration degree program. Additionally, the School partners with Queensland University of Technology to offer a doctoral degree program in Library and Information Science.

The School is ranked #22 among the nation's top programs in Library and Information Science, according to *U.S. News & World Report's* "America's Best Graduate Schools." The School is also a recognized leader in making effective use of leading edge technologies for distance learning.

About the Institute of Museum and Library Services The Institute of Museum and Library Services is the primary source of federal support for the nation's 123,000 libraries and 17,500 museums. The Institute's mission is to create strong libraries and museums that connect people to information and ideas. The Institute works at the national level and in coordination with state and local organizations to sustain heritage, culture, and knowledge; enhance learning and innovation; and support professional development. To learn more about the Institute, please visit www.ims.gov