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Florida's 'Ask a Librarian' Service Awarded Third Consecutive Year of LSTA Funding

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'Ask a Librarian' (www.askalibrarian.org), a free online library reference service available to all Floridians, has been awarded a \$395,115 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant to continue providing its valuable statewide services. Ask a Librarian provides Florida's residents with free, convenient, real-time access to a librarian who can answer their reference questions and assist them in locating information on the Web. Library professionals from 80 participating academic, public and special libraries throughout the state staff the service.

"This third consecutive year of LSTA funding is clear recognition of the invaluable role Ask a Librarian plays in meeting the information needs of this state," said Vince Mariner, Statewide Coordinator of the Ask a Librarian service. "Anybody with an Internet connection – students, seniors, business owners... *anybody* – who has a reference question or needs help finding information on the Web can use Ask a Librarian to receive professional, expert answers to those questions. It's a great resource and one that extends the availability of professional librarians to anyone, anywhere."

Ask a Librarian is a collaborative service jointly administered by the College Center for Library Automation (CCLA) and the Tampa Bay Library Consortium (TBLC), and is a key component of the Florida Electronic Library (www.fl-elibrary.org). The current grant award is the third consecutive for Ask a Librarian, having received similar LSTA grants each year since its inception in 2002. The grant is administered by the Florida Department of State, State Library of Florida.

About CCLA and TBLC

CCLA operates the statewide Library Information Network for Community Colleges (LINCC) and associated Web-based information portal, LINCCWeb, from its headquarters in Tallahassee, Florida. As an administered program of the Florida Department of Education's Division of Community Colleges, CCLA serves 28 community colleges and 73 campus libraries in 60 cities throughout Florida. On the Web at: www.ccla.lib.fl.us and www.linccweb.org.

TBLC is a nonprofit multi-type library cooperative comprising 93 member libraries serving 12 west central Florida counties. TBLC member libraries include 6 community colleges, 3 State University System libraries, 25 private academic colleges and universities, 4 public school systems, 41 public and 14 special libraries. TBLC's Anywhere—Anytime virtual library includes Alleycat, a virtual union catalog with interlibrary loan management capabilities serving 43 libraries through 103 outlets in southwest, west and central Florida. On the Web at: <http://www.anywhereanytimelibrary.org/>.