

Unlike its predecessor, "The Library Services and Construction Act," the Library Services and Technology Act does not provide the Federal government with authority to fund library construction activities. In order to differentiate between the programs of support contemplated by the two statutes, it is useful to consider LSCA's definition of construction. Construction was defined in the LSCA, as follows:

"Construction" includes construction of new buildings and acquisition, expansion, remodeling, and alteration of existing buildings, and for the purchase, lease, and installation of equipment of any such buildings, or any combination of such activities (including architects' fees and the cost of acquisition of land). Such term includes remodeling to meet standards under the . . . Architectural Barriers Act of 1968, remodeling designed to ensure safe working environments and conserve energy, renovation or remodeling to accommodate new technologies, and the purchase of historic buildings for conversion to public libraries. For the purposes of this paragraph, the term "equipment" includes information and building technologies, video and telecommunications equipment, machinery, utilities, and built-in equipment and any necessary enclosures or structures to house them, and such term includes all other items necessary for the functioning of a particular facility for the provision of library services.

To achieve the goals of individual projects and "preserving and digitization," IMLS has permitted the use of funds for non-structural enhancements (i.e., free standing exhibits). IMLS has permitted grantees to purchase special air-conditioning units to preserve collections (similar to grants supported by the Museum Office's Conservation Projects Program). Finally, the Institute has -- in very limited circumstances, almost exclusively involving directed grants -- also allowed grantees to use a limited amount of funds for wiring and minor renovations to carry out the specific technological projects contemplated by the legislation. IMLS has considered each of these items outside the purview of construction.