

MEMO

To: State Library Commission
From: Karen Strege
Re: Long Range Plan and LSTA Evaluation Process
Date: July 26, 2000

Five year plan evaluation

The LSTA requires state library institutions to independently evaluate and report to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) regarding the activities assisted under the act before the end of the state library's 5-year plan. At its recent meeting, COSLA (Chief Officers of State Library Agencies) and IMLS have agreed on the following principles regarding this evaluation process:

1. The need to preserve flexibility for states in conducting their evaluations while meeting the statutory intent that each state evaluate its activities independently;
2. The importance of assuring that the evaluation is useful to each state;
3. The importance of assuring that the state evaluations also provide information that will help IMLS assess achievements in terms of its own strategic plan and the Government Performance and Results Act;
4. The importance of obtaining information which will satisfy the law and which will fulfill congressional interests and intent;
5. The importance of focusing evaluation efforts, to the fullest extent possible, on the impact of LSTA funds of libraries and library users.

By January 19, 2001 each state will submit a brief evaluation plan to IMLS, including an overall evaluation that describes the state's success in achieving the goals in the plans and lessons learned. IMLS also requires states to select specific goals, programs, or groups of activities for more in-depth evaluation and reporting. The final evaluation is due on April 2002 and the new five-year plan is due on July 2002.

Although these deadlines seem far away, we must start to plan our evaluation. I recommend to the Commission that you approve the general outline of the evaluation process described below. In brief, the plan calls for hiring a contractor who will conduct the assessment, draft the evaluation report, and draft a new long range plan (LRP) for the agency based on the information collected during that evaluation process.

Timetable

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| September – October 2000 | Develop and advertise for evaluation contractor |
| November – December 2000 | Select and hire contractor |
| January – April 2001 | Work with contractor to further define study and activities |
| April – July 2001 | Evaluation study |
| July – September 2001 | Contractor and MSL review data to complete evaluation. Evaluation phase complete. Next LRP drafted. |
| September – November 2001 | LRP draft comment period |
| January 2002 | LRP complete |