

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, April 9, 2020
Microsoft Teams Virtual Meeting

Attendance: Brittany Larson, Samma Johnson, Jamie Mercer, Jen Peterson, Chris Baker, Larry Oathout, Mindy King, Rebecca Schadrie, Keith Schroeder, Jennifer Bernetzke

DPI Staff: Shannon Schultz, Cindy Fesemyer, Samantha Link, Michael Dennison, Tessa Schmidt, Martha Berninger, Benjamin Miller, Monica Treptow, Bill Herman, Kurt Kiefer

Members of the Public:

Excused: Brooke Newberry, Brian Williams-Van Klooster

Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 10:02 a.m. by Schultz.

Welcome and Introductions

Kiefer thanked Division staff for pulling the meeting together during COVID-19 crisis and shared that in hosting weekly calls with system directors, there is a sense of opportunity for more collaboration than ever before. Kiefer thanked LSTA Advisory Committee members for their attendance.

Review Agenda

Schultz referenced the agenda for today.

Approval of October 16, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Baker moved to approve; Larson seconded. Motion carried with no objections.

National, State, and DPI Updates

Kiefer said the biggest update is we are all living in a different world. The Division is tracking closely federal actions, especially the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act. The CARES Act included mention of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), which funds library work in Wisconsin, and that the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) also has additional resources targeted toward states. In that additional funding of \$50 million, there will probably be \$900,000 for Wisconsin.

Dennison confirmed that is the high-end estimate, assuming that money gets distributed to states in the same way it typically does with LSTA.

Kiefer continued that the recent legislation includes language about digital access, for example WiFi hotspots and digital devices, and the Division is trying to figure out what is already available to leverage. Some existing LSTA funds were put into the Wisconsin Public Library Consortium (WPLC) to expand digital collections and decrease hold times. There is a lot of conversation among states' chief officers brainstorming how to handle issues that are also being shared in state networks, primarily among the library systems. There is still conversation around additional stimulus money being considered by Congress. Kiefer shared his belief that ALA has done well so far getting the funding they have. The planning process for the state biennial budget to begin in July 2021 is starting now, and DPI is currently working on refining its budget request.

Larson asked when the CARES Act funding would become available, and Dennison answered that state library agencies are still waiting for guidance from IMLS, because the CARES Act was not very instructive on how money is supposed to be distributed. Dennison said he hoped it would be the same way as Grants to States money, based primarily on a population factor, and he would share more information when possible.

Kiefer added that similar to the funding for WPLC, some LSTA funds will also go to Wisconsin Schools Digital Library Consortium, putting additional resources into digital collections available to students. Dennison confirmed this would be a total of \$45,000 with \$42,000 of LSTA funds and \$3,000 of state money. Larson asked what line item the extra WPLC funding came from, and Dennison said the question would be addressed when the group discussed the budget in depth.

Today's Purpose

Schmidt explained that the role of committee members is to ask questions and provide feedback on the LSTA program budget for projects with a statewide impact, ideally emphasizing equity, that reflect the five-year plan presented to IMLS for the LSTA Grants to States program.

Budget Overview

Dennison reviewed the budget document and said that 2018 budget items have all been closed and reported to IMLS. Current spending is from 2019 funds. For 2020, Wisconsin's allocation will exceed \$3 million for the first time. At any given time, there are usually three years of projects DPI staff are working on, trying to spend ahead and catch up as needed. Among 2019 projects, a fair amount were relying on in-person events that were disrupted by COVID-19. DPI is trying to make changes and get resources to where they are needed; this is evident in the difference between the estimates endorsed by the committee in October 2019 and the current active estimate.

Oathout asked how the team keeps things on track with multiple years in play. Dennison said staff are always conscious of the many years we have going on, and maintain working budgets for multiple years simultaneously so they may pull projects from different years if they find capacity. IMLS has more leeway with discretionary grants, such as Laura Bush grant, than the Grants to States, which is a formula grant with less flexibility. DPI requested guidance about spending deadline extension, and it seems unlikely this would be an option for 2019 award money to be spent beyond September 30, 2020.

Larson asked whether the previous estimate and current active estimate amounts were equal and just shifted to different projects based on COVID-19 response, or different totals. Dennison replied the total is significantly higher in the active estimate, and DPI is still gathering responses from subaward grant recipients about when they will be able to use funds. The goal is to spend 2019 funds by end of state fiscal year July 1 and then begin spending 2020 funds, rather than try to spend quickly closer to September.

Larson asked whether the difference in funds from what was originally endorsed had to be found elsewhere, or was there always going to be a surplus. Dennison answered that the difference mostly came from a surplus in personnel budget after there were additional vacancies in DPI staff positions this year compared to projections.

2019 Project Updates

Technology

Herman discussed the “Statewide Technology Projects” category for initiatives including cybersecurity training and providing devices like WiFi hotspots to expand internet accessibility at home, noting this is a better solution for urban/suburban areas than rural areas because it requires wireless infrastructure. Larson asked if this would be grant based for libraries to apply for the training or hotspots, and Herman said it will likely be population-based. Herman explained another initiative is internet speed tests to help map areas of the state where service is more or less usable and with what providers; this could be asking users to do the tests, or installing a program to run in the background on devices. This would show whether internet service is as good, fast, or consistent as it should be.

Baker asked if funding would be handled at the system level. Kiefer replied DPI would work with systems to gather information from members and distribute resources. Kiefer clarified that no personal identifiable information is collected with the speed test.

King said higher education field would be very interested in data on speed tests, as they also have issues with connectivity, and perhaps testing could be facilitated via online course offerings.

Larson said an important assessment will be determining how libraries felt they were able to respond to going fully remote and still try to provide support to patrons: the ability to

work remote and availability of technology in place such as VPN, hot spots, WiFi extended into parking lots. These abilities are varied depending on what technology infrastructure each library had in place. Kiefer said the Division staff are very open to developing evaluation of what has been working and not. Herman said libraries and schools are being surveyed about whether they are offering WiFi for this information to be plotted on a map through Public Service Commission.

Larson shared feedback from one library director that it would be nice to have a "minimum funding level towards technology resources" similar to the expectation of minimum funding for collection materials. Kiefer said this crisis has made clear that everyone needs to be connected and there is a need for ongoing sustainable funding source for this, and DPI is part of conversations toward this. Larson said there is more to capture than whether we provide WiFi and number of computers available, as staff face decisions about how they can provide service and whether they can be working.

Resource Sharing

Oathout noted that WISCAT was cut significantly, but the estimate is back up \$30,000. Was the cut too much or did something else happen? Dennison replied that components in the budget line had been separated for tracking. Berninger said these reflect the many elements necessary to make resource sharing happen.

Larson said that if the new library director boot camp is made virtual this year, it would be beneficial to also include those virtual attendees when it can be in person again. Schultz confirmed there will be a virtual version this year, but the plan is to increase budget for next year to offer this group to attend in person for benefits of camaraderie.

Community Engagement

Fesemyer said that budget reductions were due to cancellation of in-person events and the transition to virtual trainings.

Inclusive Services

Mercer said for summer reading, a number of libraries are looking at how they can take programs online using platforms that can be quite costly and asked if supporting could go to systems to utilize programs such as these. Schmidt said Division staff are talking about this, but not sure where funding will come from so did not include it definitively for LSTA here. Also looking at equity needs with online versus in-person opportunities.

2020 Project Updates

Technology

Dennison highlighted the addition since October, "Standalone ILS to Shared System ILS" project, a suggestion from committee member Brooke Newberry at the last meeting. Miller said the Division sees this project aligned well with PLSR recommendations.

Resource Sharing

Larson asked whether the “Delivery Hub Study Recommendation Action” is a defined project or a placeholder for whatever the recommendation is. Berninger said this is a placeholder for the project to come from the study this year about possible centralizing of delivery. Miller confirmed the study will happen in 2019, and this would make funds available to act on that study in 2020.

Community Engagement

Oathout asked if additional changes would be made to the format moving into next year. Fesemyer said the next scheduled in-person event is in September, assuming that is possible, but will be prepared to offer virtually if needed. Participants will also be supported to attend UW iSchool’s Lead the Way conference, postponed from this month to November.

Inclusive Services

Dennison said the budget line for “Public Library Public School” subawards reflects movement of expenditures from 2019 to 2020 due to grantees’ postponing of events, as the Division has promised to honor the full subawards next fiscal year.

Larson shared appreciation for DPI staff responding to crisis and communicating and for “Librarian’s Guide to Homelessness” training as more library staff now have opportunity to view it. King asked if those trainings are available to academic libraries in Wisconsin, and Fesemyer confirmed that audience was written in the contract.

Public Comment

Miller read the statement submitted by Corey Baumann.

LSTA 2019 Budget Endorsement

Oathout moved to endorse; King seconded. Motion carried with no objections.

Adjournment

To: LSTA Advisory Board

From: Corey Baumann, SCLS Delivery Services Coordinator

Date: 4/9/2020

South Central Library System would like to extend its sincere appreciation for the long-time consideration of LSTA resources toward our mutual goal of comprehensive delivery service to Wisconsin's public library system network. This grant has been in place for many years and has succeeded in balancing the costs to all statewide library systems and met the needs of their member libraries and patrons.

For many years, the grant has come in a sum of \$75,000 annually which has been applied to costs related to the transportation of the materials: fuel, equipment, maintenance, supplies, and a small portion of the salary of the SCLS Fleet Manager. It has been a critical piece in our planning and execution of this effort.

More recently, with the cooperation of DPI, SCLS has folded in grant awards to apply toward services extended via Waltco which completes delivery services daily between Madison and Minneapolis for MINITEX. This was a service extension that had been paid by DPI directly for the Wisconsin half of the sharing arrangement.

We appreciate the ongoing consideration as we head in to 2021 with challenges before us today. SCLS stands ready to offer our experience and services that build new networks and fosters collaboration as it relates to upcoming Public Library System Redesign pilots and projects. Additionally, we stand ready to assist our partners in making connections should local delivery vendors have difficulty resuming service at the conclusion of "stay at home" orders in the coming weeks.

It is an honor to work with this board to answer questions and take comment on allocating these resources effectively and in the best interests of the participants.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Corey Baumann