

State Library Agency (StLA) Survey Steering Committee Meeting
Residence Inn Alexandria – Old Town
1456 Duke Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
March 21-22, 2007
Minutes

Participants present:

Chief Officers: Suzanne Miller (vice chair) and Carolyn Ashcraft.

ALA: Denise Davis.

NCES: Jeffrey Owings (Wednesday only) and Tai Phan.

NCLIS: Neal Kaske.

Census: Suzanne Dorinski, John Monaco (Wednesday only), Patricia O’Shea, and Cindy Sheckells.

IMLS: Mary Chute, Michele Farrell, and George Smith (Thursday only).

FSCS Representative: Alan Zimmerman.

Other Experts: Libby Law (Secretary) and Diana Ray Tope.

NCLIS Project guests: Christie Koontz and Dean Jue.

Synergy Enterprises, Inc (SEI): Gordana Vukovic.

Suzanne Miller, vice chair, called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Regret was expressed about state legislative issues preventing two of COSLA representatives attendance.

Suzanne Miller read remarks sent by Barratt Wilkins, Chair of the Steering Committee.

Minutes: The following correction was made to the minutes: Insert “and” on page 2, under IMLS Draft Consolidation Plan, first paragraph, last sentence to read “IMLS has submitted a budget request that includes funding for the survey and will continue to work on the 2007 transition plan. **Motion to adopt the minutes as revised was made by Carolyn Ashcraft, second by Neal Kaske and passed.**

Christie Koontz and Dean Jue reported on the Library Service Area Demographic and Statistical Information System (NCLIS project) and asked for help with the identification of the most used data and the most valued data. They also presented information about other projects:

- OCLC project to identify branch closures and the reason for closures over a 5 year period (400 closures identified).
- ALA project to identify linguistically isolated populations.

The GeoLib Survey was pre-tested. Copies will be sent to SDCs. SDCs will be asked to identify someone in their state interested in data to receive the survey.

Update from Partners

On February 15, the budget Continuing Resolution was extended to cover the rest of the fiscal year. On Monday, March 19, Jeffrey Owings and Mary Chute learned that the two agencies received different interpretations about the impact of this from their OMB desk officers. IMLS was informed that they are not authorized to proceed with plans for new programs. NCES was informed that they can proceed with plans to transfer the program to IMLS.

NCLIS:

A copy of excerpts of the “NCLIS press release “Restates Position on Federal Libraries and Access to Public Information” was distributed. The resolution “urges that prior to making any decisions to close a Federal library, cut services, or dramatically restructure an agency’s library system, public and Congressional input be solicited in an open process.

Neal Kaske announced that he will be leaving NCLIS on April 2 to accept the Head of Public Service for the Library System position at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA).

IMLS:

Mary Chute confirmed that IMLS expects to take over the public library and state library statistics programs and explained the impact of the extension of the continuing resolution.

They are doing everything they can until they receive the official authorization to proceed. IMLS is looking at standards, policies, and procedures. The confidentiality policy is currently being reviewed by the general counsel office. Informal conversations are being held with Census regarding the future of the statistics program but IMLS is not authorized to negotiate a MOU. There are no resources to plan or prepare for the FSCS December conference.

IMLS has reprioritized and will hire a CIO to fill the vacant position created by Rebecca Danver’s resignation. They have received 39 applications. At this time there are no funds to hire the ‘chief statistician’ to oversee the statistics program.

Steering Committee membership was discussed. IMLS voting members will be Mary Chute (Library Programs), CIO (when hired), and Chief Statistician (when hired). Mamie Bittner and George Smith will serve until the CIO and Chief Statistician are employed. Mary Downs moved to the Office of Policy, Planning, Research, and Communications. Michele Farrell will also attend meetings.

Neal Kaske had planned to spend 2 days a week at IMLS to help with transition. Although he is no longer available to do this, he will be available for advice.

Concern was expressed about possible delays in the release of the StLA Survey. The survey is scheduled for October.

Mary Chute will keep the Steering Committee informed about the status of OMB authorization and funding and about any assistance needed to move things forward.

Suzanne Miller expressed Barratt Wilkins concern about the location of the statistics program within the IMLS structure. Assurance was provided that it will be in the newly created office of the CIO, that reports to the Director.

NCES:

As of October 1, NCES will not be in the data collection business for public libraries and state library agencies. Funds have been re-allocated to be used for the school and staffing surveys. NCES has been working hard to be ready for the transition and only learned about the OMB problem on Monday. Jeff Owings reported that NCES has copied files to Census. Contractor support has been provided to Census and Census staff has been trained.

Jeff Owings reported that he contacted OMB and talked with Brian Madison after learning about the situation with OMB. IMLS has not heard anything from their OMB desk officer.

Jeff Owings and Tai Phan will serve as voting members on the Steering Committee.

Census:

Census is working with NCES and IMLS. Work on files and codes are progressing well. Everything will be ready to go October 1.

The MOU and some policy issues such as access to restricted files and confidentiality need to be resolved. It takes 3 months for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to be negotiated between agencies.

A recommendation was made for IMLS to adopt the NCES policy regarding release of the restricted data files. This policy is generally used by other data collection agencies.

Johnny Monaco reported on the Census role in the transition. They are ahead of schedule although there is still a lot to do. Census is in good shape to have the surveys ready. He has a very detailed record of who is responsible for each task. Concern was expressed about resolving the Continuing Resolution issue as soon as

possible. The recommendation is to have the IMLS/Census MOU scheduled of July – June so that delays in the federal budget process do not create future funding issues.

2005 data: The data was released in December 2006.

2006 data: Data has been collected. NCES will finalize the data file. Census will provide the post edit checks and other services previously handled by Elaine Kroe. IMLS will be responsible for the tables and the report. Data file should be available in May 2007. Issue: Will IMLS be ready to release the data file October? Will IMLS release the data file prior to release of the publication?

Cindy Shekells reported that editing is being completed for the last 5 states. Close out is March 30. Census is working on tables, using the same format as last year. Un-imputed data will be used for review of tables. Census needs publication guideline from IMLS.

Cindy Shekells will identify any significant data collection and editing problems and inform the Steering Committee.

COSLA:

Suzanne reported that COSLA is continuing to watch and support the transition of the statistics program to IMLS. The members of COSLA want to do everything possible to make the transition smooth and to ensure processes are in place for collecting quality data. COSLA members are being surveyed to identify the most important data items, the most used data items, and the least used data items. It was pointed out that State Librarians may not use the data as much as others.

COSLA is working on developing strategy for reauthorization of LSTA.

COSLA Annual Salary Survey deadline was last Friday (March 16). Suzanne Miller received the surveys. The schedule for this survey will be shifted to the fall. A second survey will be conducted this fall. There was a discussion of providing access to the COSLA survey data and the posting of the data on the COSLA website.

NCLIS Staffing: Plans for filling the NCLIS vacant position created by Neal Kaske's resignation are unknown. It will be difficult if not impossible to fill the position given plans for closing NCLIS. Staffing at NCLIS is very limited. Status of the MOU between NCES and NCLIS was discussed.

The OMB Approval of StLAS for FY2008. The StLAS and FSCS packages were filed at the same time.

E-Metric Data Collection: It is not known if this was part of the OMB package submitted. Alan Zimmerman reported that the e-metric data elements were given to

Rebecca Danvers to be included in the package. Mary Chute will check on this. Alan Zimmerman will check e-mail messages from Rebecca Danvers.

Task Force on Part L (State Library Program Expenditures) and Part N (Public Policy Issues): Carolyn Ashcraft, Michele Farrell, Libby Law, Patricia O’Shea, Cindy Sheckells, and Alan Zimmerman met. After the meeting Carolyn Ashcraft reported that there are no problems with the individual parts; however, there are comparability issues between the two parts.

The difficulty of collecting policy issue data in a timely manner was identified. The policy issue question will be referred to the COSLA Research and Statistics Committee to determine if they should be part of this survey, changed to yes/no questions, or collected as part of a fast response survey. Carolyn Ashcraft will review the history of this and report in September.

StLA Survey Training at the December 2006 Conference: About 2/3 of the SDCs have responsibility for the StLA Survey. Suzanne Miller and Alan Zimmerman provided a concurrent session on the survey including a brief discussion of e-metrics. The session was well received. Evaluations indicate that the training should be repeated annually and that more than one hour is needed. Suzanne Miller serves on the FSCS Conference Subcommittee and will pursue this.

Scheduling of future StLAS meetings: March meetings for StLAS Steering Committee meetings do not work for the COSLA members, who are dealing with serious legislative issues within their states each March. There was a discussion about changing the scheduled meetings to June and September. The schedule for making changes to the survey were discussed. Any changes would have to be done at the September meeting.

StLA Prospectus: Suzanne Miller distributed a copy of the June 9, 2004 StLA Prospectus. In addition to general editing the following were discussed:

- Changing the NCES responsibility to IMLS responsibility.
- Revising “Organization, Offices and People Involved” to reflect the new structure.
- Name for the new programs and for future IMLS publication of data – suggestions included Census of Public Libraries, Census of State Library Agencies. Note: The FSCS Steering Committee recommended changing the name of the public library program to Public Library Statistics Cooperative. Michele Farrell will present this information to IMLS for their reaction.
- Addressing the inclusion of the U.S. territories in the Scope of the Survey.
- Include procedures for adding and deleting data elements to the survey.
- Changes to the voting structure to reflect 3 votes for IMLS, 2 votes for Census and 1 vote for NCES.
- Address the relationship to other library surveys such as Public Library Survey, Consortia Survey, Academic Library Survey, and School Library/Media Center Survey.

Concern was expressed about access to older NCES data files.

New publication issues discussed included:

- New title, ISBN, publisher and copyright
- The title of publications was also discussed.
- Are there any IMLS publication conventions that need to be considered.
- Need for good links between the old titles and the new titles.
- Census will let IMLS know the deadline for the new name.

Mary Chute, and possibly Mamie Bittner, will attend COSLA on April 30 and provide an update on the status of the transition and issues identified.

Access to Preliminary Data Files is needed as soon as possible.

The next scheduled meeting is September 12-13, 2007.

Neal Kaske was thanked for his contribution to the program.

Plus:

Neal Kaske's Presence

Minus:

Absence of Barratt Wilkins, Peggy Rudd and Jan Walsh

The meeting was adjourned.

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To Do

Carolyn Ashcraft: Provide recommendations for handling Part L (State Library Program Expenditures) and Part N (Public Policy Issues).

Census: Let IMLS know the naming conventions and the deadline for a new name.

Mary Chute: Provide an update on the transition status and issues at the COSLA meeting in April.

Mary Chute: Check on status of E-metric data items in OMB package submitted for OMB approval.

Mary Chute: Keep Steering committee members informed about status of OMB authorization and funding and about any assistance needed to move things forward.

Mary Chute: Identify IMLS publication conventions that will impact on the library statistics publications.

Michele Farrell: Present proposed name changes to IMLS for their reaction.

Neal Kaske: Be available for advice.

Suzanne Miller: Explore having more time for StLA Survey training at the December FSCS Conference.

Suzanne Miller: Check into providing access to COSLA survey data.

Cindy Sheckells: Inform Steering committee about data collection and editing problems.

Alan Zimmerman: Review e-mail correspondence from Rebecca Danvers regarding e-metric and the OMB clearance package.