

Illinois Library Association Executive Board Actions
Regarding a Grant Proposal on the Economic Impact of Libraries

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LSTA Grant Proposal on the Economic Impact of Public Libraries

The Florida and South Carolina studies were distributed electronically prior to the board meeting. After general discussion, it was determined that C. Ruhnke, D. Bryan, and N. Huntley will study this issue and make their recommendations to the board at the next ILA Executive Board meeting.

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Florida and South Carolina studies

D. Harmon reminded the ILA Executive Board that the Florida and South Carolina studies were distributed electronically prior to the previous board meeting. C. Ruhnke, D. Bryan, and N. Huntley were requested to study this issue and make their recommendations to the board at the February 2006 ILA Executive Board meeting.

The ad hoc committee recommends that the Illinois Library Association:

- develop and seek grant monies to fund a multi-year project to determine the level of economic benefits provided by libraries to their community and to the state as a whole;
- develop and provide training to market the results in a manner meaningful to Illinois libraries;
- establish a small committee to develop and oversee the project;
- use public, academic, and governmental libraries; and
- use a representation of Illinois libraries based on population, budget, location, and type.

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Follow-up on ILA Executive Board Meetings

Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries

C. Ruhnke made a presentation to the Illinois State Library Advisory Committee. A. Craig suggested that ILA write a letter to her explaining the envisioned multi-year study of the economic benefit of libraries to their communities.

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Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries

D. Harmon stated the state library is awaiting a one page summary of the plan, which will be available at the September 15 ILA Executive Board meeting.

Thursday, 7 September 2006

Anne B. Craig
Illinois State Library
300 S. Second St.
Springfield, IL 62701-1796

Dear Anne:

Dianne Harmon asked me to mail to you the enclosed information on the proposed study of economic value of libraries. If you need additional information or have any questions, please contact me or Dianne (phone: 815-740-2660; e-mail: धारmon@joliet.lib.il.us).

Thanks.

Best regards,

Robert P. Doyle
ILA Executive Director

Times are always challenging for libraries. We who work in or for libraries understand the value of the institutions we serve, but value is a term that can express many different concepts of worth. Illinois libraries need to communicate that worth in terms that all segments of our community will understand. We often talk about outputs, i.e., our files of statistics, but we need to demonstrate the economic outcomes or benefits that libraries in Illinois provide.

Excellent studies on the economic value of libraries have been conducted by the Urban Libraries Council, the State Library and Archives of Florida, and the University of South Carolina, Graduate School of Library and Information Science. Illinois has the opportunity to utilize the lessons learned from these major studies and determine the economic value of Illinois public, academic, and governmental libraries. The Illinois

Library Association (ILA) is in an excellent position to organize and manage such a project.

The ILA Executive Board requests LSTA grant monies to fund a multi-year project to determine the level of economic benefits provided by libraries to their community and to the state as a whole. This project is about research and communicating that research. The project would involve the following:

- Form an advisory team with representatives from ILA, the Illinois State Library and an expert in economic development.
- Hire a part-time project director to oversee the project
- Develop and circulate an RFP for the project
- Hire research team
- Conduct research using public, academic, and governmental libraries; use a representation of Illinois libraries based on population, budget, location, and type.
- Accept report from research team
- Develop appropriate public relations materials
- Provide training to market the results in a manner meaningful to Illinois libraries

The time frame for this project is as follows:

Year 1	Organizational matters and research.
Year 2	Training and public relations

We estimate Year 1 will cost \$100,000.

Thank you for considering our proposal.

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Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries

A. Craig said the state library had received exhibit 5, pp. 69-70 from the board packet regarding the Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries. The state library would like to see a budget with a rationale for the project, plus a timeline in order to consider the proposal. Craig also stated the multi-year nature of this proposal doesn't really fit well with the LTSA grant program. N. Huntley and D. Bryan will talk with C. Ruhnke and D. Harmon on how best to proceed, particularly in light of an increasingly shorter timeline for the expenditure of any allocated funds by June 30, 2007.

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Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries

D. Harmon reported that research into a statewide economic benefit survey has come to a temporary halt. Committee members need to review the basic premise of why ILA should do a statewide survey of the economic benefit of libraries to their communities.

D. Bryant shared an article titled "Maryland's Successful Campaign to Increase Library Funding." In the last two years, Maryland's public libraries have been successful in getting major funding legislation through the Maryland General Assembly---not once, but twice. With a major grant from the Maryland State Library, the public library community hired a nationally known pollster, Potomac, Inc. to conduct a citizen poll. The poll looked specifically at the return on investment of government dollars in public libraries. Ninety-two percent of those polled felt that public libraries were a good investment for their tax dollar. The poll was used successfully to impress state delegates and senators with how much their constituents used and valued their public libraries. The Maryland Poll cost the public libraries \$57,000, but it generated \$35 million (over four years) in new state funding. The poll gave a powerful weapon not only to protect funding, but also to increase it. It effectively demonstrated that libraries had strong community backing and, therefore, significant political clout both at the local and state levels. The two other studies from Florida and South Carolina, previously examined by the ILA Executive Board, also increased funding in those respective states.

(In December, two other studies were released. According to "Economic Impact Analysis of the University of Southern California (USC) Annual Operations: Fiscal Year 2005-2006," USC is responsible for \$4 billion annually in economic activity in Los Angeles County alone. The other study "Economic Benefits of Public Libraries: Value for Money: Southwestern Ohio's Return from Investments in Public Libraries," was commissioned by nine public libraries in four counties in southwest Ohio. The report demonstrates that their economic impact is nearly four times greater than the amount invested in the libraries' operations. A report from Driscoll & Fleeter, a Columbus firm specializing in state and local budget tax policy, concludes that the libraries' cumulative expenditure of about \$74.5 million returned a quantifiable direct economic benefit of \$238.6 million, or \$3.81 for each dollar expended in 2005. According to Bill Driscoll (218-444-7798) of Levin, Driscoll & Fleeter, the study cost \$25,000. It was paid for by the nine public libraries in southwestern Ohio, based on some formula basis, he thought out of general funds.)

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Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries

D. Harmon noted that Wisconsin is conducting a study of economic benefits of libraries. To date, there is nothing new to report regarding a study in Illinois.

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Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries

Since the 2005 ILA Annual Conference in Peoria, ILA has been exploring the possibility of conducting a study on the economic benefits of libraries. R. Doyle stated that previously distributed state reports and/or information include: South Carolina, Florida, Ohio, California, Maryland, and Wisconsin.

At the Friday, 24 February 2006 ILA Executive Board meeting, the board received the ad hoc committee recommendation to:

- develop and seek grant monies to fund a multi-year project to determine the level of economic benefits provided by libraries to their community and to the state as a whole;
- develop and provide training to market the results in a manner meaningful to Illinois libraries;
- establish a small committee to develop and oversee the project;
- use public, academic, and governmental libraries; and
- use a representation of Illinois libraries based on population, budget, location, and type.

At the 27 March 2007 Illinois State Library Advisory Committee meeting, Commissioner of the Chicago Public Library (CPL) Mary Dempsey mentioned that CPL was conducting an economic benefits study with Northwestern University.

Dempsey suggested that the state library might want to sponsor a similar study on a statewide basis using federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funds.

At this meeting, Doyle distributed information about two recent reports: "Worth Their Weight: An Assessment of the Evolving Field of Library Valuation," by the Americans for Libraries (ALC) and "Arts and Economic Prosperity III," by Americans for the Arts (Exhibit 6, pp. 39-40). On Monday, 25 June at the 2007 ALA Annual Conference, in Washington, D.C., a panel discussion will be held on the issue of using return on investment (ROI) as an advocacy tool for libraries. Doyle wondered if an ILA Executive Board member plans to attend.

Doyle said that to his knowledge there is nothing new to report regarding ILA sponsoring a similar study in Illinois.

The ILA Web site www.ila.org/advocacy contains the various above-mentioned reports and ILA's discussions on this issue.

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Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries

Since the 2005 ILA Annual Conference in Peoria, ILA has been exploring the possibility of conducting a study on the economic benefits of libraries. The ILA Web site www.ila.org/advocacy contains various economic benefits or return-on-investment reports and ILA's discussions on this issue. Several state library associations have used these studies to successfully receive major funding increases through their respective legislative bodies. D. Dziedzic has volunteered to move this project forward.

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Statewide Study of Economic Benefits for Illinois Libraries

D. Dziedzic will continue the association's work on this project. For the past two years, the association has been seeking to define and fund this issue. Dziedzic consulted with the past chair Dianne Harmon. In addition, Dziedzic will be working on a Return on Investment (ROI) study for Naperville Public Library (NPL). At this point, ILA needs an Request for Proposal (RFP) and funding for the project. NPL needs an RFP, but has internal funding. Dziedzic plans to develop a base RFP for NPL, which can then be expanded to include the idea of a statewide project or statewide wide model. The ILA RFP would then serve as the basis for funding opportunities and a cost estimate.