

Future of Illinois Library Cooperation (FILC) Plan

This document has been developed with input from more than seventy representatives of the Illinois library community who attended a summit meeting in the fall of 2009, just as the state's financial crisis was beginning to unfold. Three task forces worked on issues of structure, service, and funding, researching models in other states and the current economic climate and formalized their assessment and recommendations into the following outline. The intent is to:

- Focus on the impact of services to end-users, maximizing the value of an organized joint approach to the limited resources available and recognizing current political, economic, and organizational capacity
- Fund necessary research to adopt the best possible models for critical cooperative services (e.g., delivery, shared catalogs, group purchasing, databases, continuing education, etc.)
- Take into account varying needs of different types of libraries and different geographic concerns and the need for equitable sharing of resources
- Provide an actionable blueprint for discussions with policymakers

A draft was presented to the Illinois State Library, the Illinois State Library Advisory Committee, the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI), Illinois School Library Media Association (ISLMA), other library groups, and the ILA membership at the 2010 ILA Annual Conference in September. The plan was adopted by the ILA Executive Board at its meeting on November 12, 2010, as a basis for continued research and development of concrete policy and budget options.

PRIORITY 1: DELIVERY

Rationale for priority: By far the most economical way to ensure a wider range of resources for library patrons is by physically moving books from one community to another; even if the future leads to greater use of electronic resources, current library usage is heavily concentrated in physical materials. Service requires statewide coordination to maximize both distribution and economies of scale; most widely-used of library services.

Current Service/Structure

Provided through Illinois Library Delivery System (ILDS), serving the ten systems, and 134 Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois (CARLI) libraries; in addition, the library systems themselves provide significant delivery services (threatened and/or curtailed under current allocations)

Short-term (FY11-12) Goal

Adapt and maintain core services with reallocation of current funding sources as available; possibility of augmenting with addition of federal funds; member contributions; consider frequency changes

Longer-term Goal

Create single statewide delivery system, probably utilizing existing network as basis for hub-spoke model; determine best operating structure to provide or outsource

Recommendations

- Identify structure (state library, new system structure, other) to coordinate
 - Conduct cost-benefit analysis of options (internal, outsourced, cost-sharing, fee-based, etc.) to be developed at the state level
 - Develop statewide RFP (Request for Proposal) to explore provider/service options; allocate resources to fund RFP; designate agency to manage responses
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PRIORITY 2: SHARED CATALOGS

Rationale for priority: Necessary to share resources and provide increased access for library patrons; requires statewide coordination to minimize duplication and maximize technological innovation.

Current Service/Structure

LLSAPs (Local Library System Automation Program — automated library catalogs) are currently “shared” through the Statewide Illinois Library Catalog (uses OCLC interface)

Short-term (FY11-12) Goal

Do not merge individual catalogs, but continue to maintain access to the interface (through interoperability); may require technology consortia; maintain I-Share

Longer-term Goal

Identify options/alternatives to current OCLC interface; goal would be a shared catalog, utilizing new interoperability products

Recommendations

- Reevaluate current providers/contracts
 - Identify structure to investigate options to provide shared catalog
 - Develop timeline for statewide RFP to explore provider/service options; allocate resources to fund RFP; designate agency to manage responses
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PRIORITY 3: GROUP PURCHASING

Rationale for priority: Especially important for costly resources such as electronic databases; cooperation in this area leads to both possible cost-savings and more uniformity in access to residents statewide.

Current Service/Structure

- State library purchases licenses to OCLC databases
- Systems, other consortia (CARLI, Network of Illinois Learning Resources in Community Colleges [NILRC], Innovation Experts, Missouri Library Network Corporation [MLNC], etc.) license various databases for their members

Short-term (FY11-12) Goal

- Identify and consolidate licensing of a core of databases for all libraries through state library
- Provide options for à la carte purchasing through statewide or multistate consortia (Midwest Collaborative for Library Services [MCLS], MLNC, LYRASIS)

Longer-term Goal

Coordinated, affordable, customizable options that include a common core, recognizable to patrons

Recommendations

- Determine current cost structure, renegotiate if possible
 - Investigate consortial options; identify structure to coordinate
 - Develop statewide RFP to explore provider/service options; allocate resources to fund RFP; designate agency to manage responses
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PRIORITY 4: LIBRARY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Rational for priority: In order to effectively serve their patrons, libraries need to be able to network and draw on resources from their colleagues, receive one-on-one training and consultation, and access continuing education opportunities. These have been traditionally provided through a combination of state library and system activities, augmented by professional and voluntary associations, library schools, and other informal structures.

Current Service/Structure

- Both system and state library staff and programs in this area are being reduced or eliminated
- Various ad-hoc offerings through professional associations (ILA, CARLI, Illinois School Library Media Association [ISLMA], Library Administrators Conference of Northern Illinois [LACONI], American Library Association [ALA], etc.)
- Online offerings, both free and paid
- Some professional development through the ALA-accredited master in library and information science programs (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Dominican University)

Short-term (FY11-12) Goal

Establish administrative structure to serve as a clearinghouse for existing opportunities

Longer-term Goal

Develop comprehensive continuing education (CE) plan to meet varied needs around the state including one-on-one training and consultation

Recommendations

Consider limited funding for an intermediate structure to coordinate and publicize CE opportunities

PRIORITY 5: ADVOCACY AND MARKETING

Rationale for priority: A collective voice is far more effective than individual ones in preserving and promoting the value of libraries; the majority of public library expenses are paid from local tax revenue, leveraging the contribution of the state; school, special, and academic libraries likewise receive non-state funding while enriching resources available to all Illinois residents.

Current Service/Structure

Since the use of taxpayer funds (federal, state, or local) for advocacy is restricted, advocacy efforts are primarily coordinated by the Illinois Library Association with participation from other statewide groups and organizations

Short-term (FY11-12) Goal

- Expand communications and education to the Illinois library community and the general public
- Assist with any regulatory or statutory changes to modify/codify the reorganized Illinois library system structure

Longer-term Goal

Develop and implement recommendations from ILA's advocacy consultant for more effective communication with elected officials

Recommendations

Continue coordination with supporters, volunteers, professional membership groups and provide support for local advocacy efforts
