

# **CONSULTING STANDARDS**

## **from the**

### **Standards for the Services of Illinois Multitype Library Systems**

#### **Definition of the Service**

System consulting staff provide professional advice on matters relating to administration, operation, and creation of libraries.

#### **Introduction**

Local library development is paramount to improvement of library service for residents of Illinois. The system role in improving local libraries hinge on a quality consulting program with staff that are able to provide professional advice on a wide range of topics that affect the day-to-day and long-term operations of libraries. The advisory role of the system is designed not to provide answers to local libraries' problems or perceived problems, but to work with local agencies to identify problems and assist in developing solutions that are appropriate for the local situation. Certainly there are times that the role of the consultant can be compared to that of a reference librarian: utilizing professional publications to answer questions identified by the member libraries.

Consulting services can vary from system to system. The key in these standards is to have available at least a minimum number of professional staff to work with the issues that arise from day to day.

A final consulting role is the specialized area of expanding tax-supported library service. Special emphasis is placed on the expansion of tax-supported public library service throughout Illinois, from the encouragement of larger units of service to working with individual citizens who are interested in establishing a library and alerting them to the larger picture of what a library can be and do for a community. The role can offer systems opportunities for creativity. Overall consulting offers systems a core of methods of delivering the service and much opportunity for creativity and inter-system cooperation.

#### **G.1 Consulting - Administration and Service**

G.1.1 The system agency shall have an operational plan that describes consulting services offered to Legislation/Law, Library and Personnel Administration, Marketing of Library Service, and Planning and Budgeting, and in such areas as the respective system needs assessment may indicate.

According to the system standards document, page 12, "Standards E through L are considered the core service standards." The consulting services operational plan addresses consulting services in these areas, and includes consulting services developed to meet member needs.

The operational plan, as a minimum, shall:

A. Identify the consulting services provided.

1. The system agency provides professional consulting and indepth advisory service on matters relating to administration, operation, and creation of libraries. Consultants advise and counsel member library staff, administration, and boards in accordance with each consultant's area of expertise.
  - a. System agency consultants supply information in a variety of formats and also act as catalysts, coordinators, educators, and mediators in assisting member libraries.
  - b. System agency consultants work on cooperative projects with member libraries helping them to resolve any problems that arise.
  - c. System agency consultants encourage and coordinate the establishment of public library service in the unserved areas of the system.
  - d. System agency consultants encourage member libraries to work within their community for the strengthening of library services to the citizens of their service area.
  - e. The System agency, at intervals, retains the services of highly trained professionals to work with member libraries on current issues that require special skills (i.e. construction, grantsmanship, public relations, legal issues, etc.).

B. Identify the individual(s) of the system staff or as otherwise designated by the system as the provider of the consulting service in each of the core service and general consulting areas.

## 1. Automation/Technology

The Technology Development Consultant is responsible for expanding the knowledge of members in uses of technology in their respective institutions.

The Skills Development Consultant is responsible for the development and expansion of technological skills within the service area through training.

The Cooperating Libraries for Automated System Services (CLASS) Manager is responsible for the development of the local library system automation program (LLSAP).

## 2. Bibliographic Access

The Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant is responsible for the LCLS Union List of Serials (SILO) and the ongoing "049 Project" which enters the holdings of dial access members (includes all members that are not directly contracted with the LLSAP).

The Skills Development Consultant works with all members to develop and to advance skills necessary to provide information to a variety of clients.

## 3. Consulting

The Network Support Services Senior Consultant and the Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant provide consulting in the areas of establishment, expansion, and the development of library services, library and personnel administration, marketing of library service, planning and budgeting, and continuing education. The Executive Director of the system agency provides consulting to library boards seeking a new director and to library directors and boards seeking assistance in planning or expanding library buildings.

## 4. Continuing Education

Workshops and seminars are planned, developed, and offered for library staff and trustees by all four consultants and CLASS Manager (LLSAP). The overall coordination of the

program is the responsibility of the Network Support Services Senior Consultant.

#### 5. Delivery

The Network Support Services Senior Consultant is responsible for the overall operation of the service. The system agency provides counsel and advice to member libraries to ensure the most efficient and convenient means to receive system agency delivery of library materials and information.

#### 6. Interlibrary Loan

The Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant is responsible for consulting with member libraries on interlibrary loan policy and procedures within the service area and throughout the state.

#### 7. Reciprocal Services

The Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant and the CLASS Manager are responsible for consulting in matters related to reciprocal access.

#### 8. Reference Service

The Skills Development Consultant is responsible for working with all members to develop and to advance skills necessary to provide information to a variety of clients. The Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant works with members on matters relating to contract for reference service. Lewis & Clark Community College provides the actual delivery of reference services.

#### 9. Additional Services

Will be developed with consultation of the LAC Committee, the interest groups, the board of directors, and through guidelines from the Illinois State Library.

C. In addition to the core service areas, the system agency provides consulting in the following general areas by the individuals designated in response to member needs.

## 1. Collection Management

Consulting is offered on matters relating to collection development by LCLS by the Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant, the Skills Development Consultant, and the Network Support Services Senior Consultant.

## 2. Grants Development

All four consultants and the CLASS Manager (LLSAP) are involved in grants development.

## 3. Interlibrary Cooperation

The Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant and the Network Support Services Senior Consultant promote interlibrary cooperation between all types of libraries. The CLASS Manager, the Technology Development Consultant, and the Skills Development Consultant advise and facilitate interlibrary cooperation between CLASS/LLSAP members and dial access members.

## 4. Legislation and Law

The Executive Director and the Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant handle all legal questions requested from library staff and trustees. If there is a legal opinion on the matter on file, this is referred to the requesting library director. If there is no legal opinion already on file, the matter is either referred to an attorney or the requesting library director/trustee is advised to seek the counsel of the library's attorney.

## 5. Library and Personnel Administration

The Network Support Services Senior Consultant and the Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant counsel and advise administrators and supervisory staff on matters pertaining to library management. The Executive Director counsels and advises public library trustees in the process of hiring an administrator.

## 6. Marketing of Library Services

A central file is maintained of materials and information on marketing library services. The consultants advise and counsel library directors and boards in matters relating to customer service and marketing. From time to time a Marketing Firm is brought in to update marketing concepts and work with member libraries on a one-on-one basis.

## 7. Planning and Budgeting

The Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant and the Network Support Services Senior Consultant counsel and advise library administrators in all types of libraries on matters pertaining to planning and budgeting.

The Technology Development Consultant works with the CLASS Manager (LLSAP) to counsel and advise library administrators in all types of libraries on planning and budgeting for participation in CLASS (LLSAP). The consultant examines and incorporates new technology into use of the service area members and the system headquarters operation.

## 8. Assistance to Libraries Seeking Membership in LCLS

The Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant and the Network Support Services Senior Consultant provide counsel and assistance for those libraries inquiring about membership in LCLS and facilitate the membership process.

## 9. Clearinghouse for Member Information

Central files are maintained of materials to send to libraries upon request: sample policies, grants, marketing and promotional materials, and lists of individuals in member libraries who agree to supply professional expertise.

D. Member libraries' consulting needs are regularly identified by member input from the LAC Committee, the interest groups that meet regularly, and the CLASS (LLSAP) Advisory Council.

E. The system agency utilizes a variety of means of delivery of consulting services.

1. Consulting service requests are received by e-mail, telephone, fax, written communication, and in person.
2. Information, counsel, guidance, and assistance is provided by consultants as appropriate.
3. Consultants communicate and disseminate information on library management, legislative issues, and professional issues through memos, newsletters, and other means as appropriate.

F. The system agency has multitype levels of consulting assistance.

1. System agency consultants are facilitators in the problem solving process. They counsel and advise member library staff in response to consulting requests.
2. Responses may consist of specific solutions to problems as found within library administration sources, counsel, and advise based on the actions and decisions of other libraries with the same problem or referral to a person or organization that has the specific expertise.

G.1.3 System consultants shall acknowledge requests for consulting within two working days.

Consulting requests are acknowledged within two working days either by phone, e-mail, fax, or in writing. In many cases the response is made within that time frame.

G.1.4 System consulting service shall satisfy at least 90% of consulting requests in the core and general consulting areas listed in subsection G.1.2 above and in other areas as outlined in the system plan of consulting service.

Consultants will explore a way to identify the satisfaction rate of consulting request responses.

G.1.5 System consulting service shall satisfy the percentage indicated in these standards of requests for consulting within five working days or negotiate a different time limit with the person(s) making the request.

Consultants will explore ways of logging all requests with date of acknowledged response.

G.2 Consulting - Staff and Resources

G.2.1 System consultants or other persons designated by the system to consult.

System consultants or other persons designated by the system to consult in the general consulting areas, as specified in subsection G.1.2 of this section shall possess minimum qualifications:

1. a fifth-year degree from an American Library Association accredited library program, or if the consultant is not a librarian, the degree or other formal education qualification generally accepted by the practitioners of that profession or occupation specialty at the minimum accepted for such practitioner;
2. at least three years relevant experience in the consultant's designated area(s) of expertise;
3. demonstrated experience in effective written and oral communication as well as group process techniques.

System consultants possess a fifth-year degree in library science, three years relevant experience, and demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills. All four consultants have experience in group process techniques.

G.2.2 Each system having 100 or fewer members shall employ, contract for, or otherwise provide a minimum of three full-time equivalent (FTE) consultants, excluding the executive director. Each system having more than 100 members shall employ or contract for at least three FTE consultants, excluding the executive director, for the first 100 members and at least one additional consultant for each additional 50 members or any fraction of that number.

The standards call for LCLS to employ four full-time consultants for its 135 member organization. The consultant positions are: Network Support Services Senior Consultant; Technology Development Consultant; Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant; and Skills Development Consultant.

- G.2.3 Each full-time consultant shall spend at least 30 contract hours and each part-time consultant shall spend at least the proportional amount of contract hours in each calendar year attending workshops, seminars, classes, etc., to improve specific skills relevant to the consulting assignment.

The four consultants will spend at least 30 contract hours attending workshops and seminars during each fiscal year in their fields of expertise. These activities are tracked through the consultants' monthly reports, but a system-wide monitoring method for these activities will be developed by the consultants in 1995.

- G.2.4 Each consultant on the system's staff shall spend at least five days annually at system expense at regional, state, national, or international professional meetings relative to the consultant's profession.

All four consultants will meet this standard. The only exception will be if a new individual is hired during the course of any given year.

### G.3 Consulting - Membership Responsibilities

- G.3.1 Personnel in member libraries should be willing to share expertise with other member libraries.

The personnel working at member libraries exhibit a willingness to share expertise on system committees and the eight interest groups that meet regularly, as well as the Librarians Advisory Council Committee and the Continuing Education Advisory Committee. Members are frequently asked and also volunteer to present system-wide workshops.

- G.3.2 Member libraries should be cognizant of the scope of consulting services available through the system.

LCLS conducts an annual orientation for new and current staff members working with the service area to acquaint them with LCLS services. The Network Support Services Senior Consultant and the Marketing, Network and Governance Consultant work directly with libraries inquiring about system membership and throughout this first full year of membership with these libraries. Member libraries should include information about LCLS consulting services in staff training activities and should ensure the system newsletters and memos are distributed throughout the library to all staff.

G.3.3 Member libraries should provide input on consulting needs to be addressed so that they may be included in the system plan.

LCLS member libraries regularly provide input on consulting needs through individual requests, information gathered from the two advisory committees, and the one LLSAP advisory committee, the interest group meetings, and the Fall ALL and Spring ALL (All Libraries, All Librarians) meetings. Member libraries should encourage staff to provide this input.

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