

Proposed Illinois Library System Standards on
Professional Development and Consulting
Revised 1/16/09

Comments from LTLS staff in red. 1/12/2009

General comment

Why is consulting lumped in with professional development? There are many other types of consulting that do not include “professional development”. Such as questions about IPLAR, public per capita, school per capita. Advising someone on how to pull statistics is not in my opinion professionally developing that person. It is a routine function of their position. If someone asks what is my ELI number? That does not constitute professional development. Consultants answer a variety of questions that do not have anything to do with training or continuing education.

I wonder if this entire document and the standards or “requirements” because this isn’t a standard should be re-thought considering the economy, the difficulty in changing this etc. This needs to be broad enough to allow for flexibility in how the technology and world is changing.

Definition of Service: Illinois Library Systems staff will offer member library staff and library governing officials of all types of libraries opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and performance through one-on-one advice and continuing education programs targeted to meet identified and anticipated needs.

Expectations

a) Systems will offer high-quality professional programs with detailed descriptions outlining expected outcomes.

b) In response to member requests, Systems will provide consulting services targeted to meet individual library needs.

Does this mean that if a member library requests the system to do a building plan for them that systems are obligated to do this? I am sure that is not what is intended but the way it is worded it is certainly could be interpreted that way. This is true for many

extensive consulting requests. In addition does this mean that systems don't do consulting if it isn't requested.

c) Basic/core programs and consulting provided by system staff will be offered at no cost to members. This will include working with member libraries to meet published standards, and site-visits to member libraries as necessary.

c) Basic/core programs and consulting - needs more definition or description.

What is the definition of basic or core? We do not have a specific core set that everyone must take.

Given that systems are to be permitted to charge a cost recovery fee for "specialized" as opposed to "basic/core" programs and consulting, each should be much more specifically defined. The current document gives just one example of basic/core programs and consulting (i.e. working with member libraries to meet published standards) and not one example of a specialized program.

The inability of systems to charge fees is not rational in the economy and depending on what happens with the budget. This would be better said that there would be no fees for x number of hours of CE (and that is even problematic with the economy). Maybe fees should not be charged on using services, orientation, or something.

d) Most consulting and continuing education programs will be at no cost to member libraries. However, Systems may charge a cost recovery fee for specialized programs presented by speakers not associated with Systems or the Illinois State Library.

d) Most consulting/ce at no cost - this is ill-advised and backward-thinking. I think this should be separated. Perhaps they could say core consulting at no charge, but ce should be treated differently

Could "associated with" be interpreted to include staff of member libraries? If so, this should say "employed by systems or the Illinois State Library"

d) Most consulting and continuing education programs will be at no cost to member libraries. However, systems may charge a cost recovery fee for specialized programs. Recovery fees for programs presented by speakers associated with Systems or the Illinois State Library will not include speaker fees.

Point c) and d) are in conflict with each other. c) states that we will not charge for basic or core. d) states that we will not charge for “most”.

What is the definition of “most”?

Most is a real problem word in this section

e) Systems will share staff expertise with each other and will collaborate in developing, planning and presenting continuing education programs.

Illinois Library Systems Responsibilities

Staff in each Library System shall:

a) Work with all member libraries to develop a written plan identifying the continuing education and consulting needs of the system membership, and describe how those needs will be met. Update this plan and share this information with members on a regular basis.

a) states that this is a plan that will be updated regularly. In the Assessment section it states that the plan is annual and must be submitted to the state.

I actually think there should be a yearly plan for ce - I'd even go so far as to say that there should be a statewide plan because I think overall CE is out of control (too many classes, too few people to take them)

How often, exactly, is “regular” updating and sharing of a written plan for identifying and meeting the CE and consulting needs of system members? Is this the annual plan identified in the Assessment section?

b) Hire professional staff with appropriate expertise to meet most of the continuing education and consulting needs of member libraries. Contract, when appropriate, for specialized programming and specialized consultation.

Contracting for specialized expertise is potentially confusing compared to above section on not charging for programs presented by System or ISL staff. If a system contracts with another system for services of their consultants, those services would be provided at no cost to members. But what if part of the contract is for a workshop. Can the system recover reasonable expenses (travel, hotel, etc.)? I think the distinction is that we don't charge back any direct speaker fees, but we should be able to recover other expenses.

c) Work collaboratively with staff in other library systems to identify staff expertise and share that expertise between/among systems to ensure that consulting services and continuing education are delivered consistently, equitably and cost effectively statewide. Create a knowledge inventory and develop methods for informal information sharing.

c) states that we will work collaboratively with other systems. That's seems ok to me. But CE will never be "consistently, equitably and cost effectively statewide". Downstate does not have access to the same quality of speakers that the Chicago suburbs do. Downstate will have to incur travel, etc. which prevents the same type and amount of the events from being offered. Yes, we could charge more for the event, but we wouldn't get the attendance so events will be cancelled instead of held.

d) Plan and schedule high-quality, timely programs that meet member needs. Deliver these programs in the most accessible format(s) for members, using technology to expand access.

e) Participate in the statewide calendar of educational opportunities for members.

Reword this to be more generic. Reference to a specific service (the statewide calendar) can make the document seem dated if that service changes in the future.

e) Participate in statewide dissemination of information on educational opportunities for members.

f) Analyze attendance at programs and evaluate the effectiveness of programs.

g) Provide one-on-one consulting services that respond to member needs.

h) Provide professional development opportunities for system staff.

Member Responsibilities

Member Library staff shall:

a) Determine local continuing education and consulting needs, and then provide this information to the library system.

b) Share expertise with staff in other libraries and library systems.

c) Offer to host system-sponsored programs when feasible.

d) Participate in System workshops to build skills, expertise and knowledge.

e) Participate in the evaluation of individual professional development programs which members have attended, and the evaluation of system professional consulting services used.

This is weak - there is less emphasis on members' attending/pursuing/believing in ce and no requirements to send not only directors but staff as well.

The only way systems are going to stay in this arena is if members take on more responsibility and commit to sending staff to events.

What happened to requiring some education by member libraries?

Assessment

Staff in each Library System shall provide to member libraries, the System Board, and the Illinois State Library:

- a) Copies of the annual plan identifying continuing education and consulting needs.
- b) A summary of how member needs were assessed and which programs and services were developed and offered to meet those needs.
- c) A report on professional development events, including the number of professional development programs offered by the system, number of events held, total number of participants and libraries, and number of contact hours provided.
- d) A report on the number (including type and format) of consulting contacts provided throughout the year. Include the number of site visits to member libraries.
- e) A list of basic/core Continuing Education and consulting programs provided to system members at no charge.
- f) A report on the effectiveness of consulting and professional development programs, including a summary of evaluations.

f) There needs to be more explicit direction on assessment - otherwise, it will be useless and every system will do it differently.

The document implies that assessment of programming and consulting effectiveness goes beyond evaluations completed after a program is presented but does not elaborate. I'd like to see some examples of what is intended.

g) A report on intersystem collaboration on conferences, consulting and programming.

h) A list professional development opportunities that system staff participated in to stay current on issues of importance to members and to

improve their ability to respond to member requests.

This entire assessment section is requiring so much bureaucracy that time won't be available to do the real job we are supposed to do and that is make library service better for the residents of Illinois. I believe in accountability, but this is not at all accountability – this is paperwork. What about ROI, what about saving money, what is the value for the members, what is the value to the residents of Illinois of good education? That's what our legislators want to know.