

Lewis & Clark Library System – Budget Message – May 2010

Area & Per Capita Grant Funding

Tina Hubert, Executive Director

Sadly, due to the Illinois financial situation, the Lewis & Clark Library System must reprioritize core services. Effective Wednesday June 30, 2010, delivery, LLSAP support, and technology services will continue to be provided by LCLS.

As of that date, LCLS will no longer provide consulting, general continuing education (however Summer School for School Librarians will still occur), marketing, advocacy, grant development, or human resources support. We are truly unhappy to have to make these service adjustments, but we must in order to sustain any form of stability for member services and the future. These decisions were made with every effort to preserve as many foundational services to LCLS members as possible within the fiscal resources available to us. One full-time position was already cut from the budget before this cash flow issue crippled our ability to continue all services. Several additional LCLS staffers will now be laid off: Charm Ruhnke, Juliette Douglas, Judy Rake, Amanda McKay, and Linda Petty. The Executive Director's position will not be filled; instead an Acting Director will be appointed at the June 15th Board meeting. LCLS will go from a 40 hour workweek to a 37 ½ hour workweek (effective July 1, 2010).

As you are aware, most LCLS funding comes from an annual grant appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly and distributed through Secretary of State Jesse White's office. We have yet to receive almost 50% of the FY2010 appropriation, for the fiscal year which ends June 30, 2010. If we continue to operate at current staffing and service levels our money would run out at the end of October. We have been notified that we should not expect any additional state payments until after November 2010. And honestly, we are hoping that a payment will be made before the end of the calendar year.

We have all done everything possible to turn this situation around. We appreciate all of your phone calls, emails, and visits to legislators on behalf of Illinois libraries and library systems. We will continue to pursue additional options to extend our ability to ride this storm without state monies arriving. LCLS is pursuing the sale of the empty lots; we intend to lease some or the entire second floor; technology support services for a fee will continue to be available; and we are starting a donation campaign right away.

We have prepared and will submit the Board approved FY2011 budget as part of the System's Area & Per Capita grant application. We have been advised by the State Library to prepare the FY2011 budget in the Area & Per Capita application at the same reduced budget amount that was appropriated for FY2010. I attained my pledge to bring the Board a budget that is balanced between expected revenues and expenditures; however that was not enough without state payments arriving.

Throughout the current fiscal year, LCLS has renegotiated most service contracts. The phone system contract was cut by more than half. While features were removed from the phone system, members were not negatively impacted. The building housekeeping contract was reduced from 5 days a week to 2 days a week; beginning in July we will have a new housekeeping provider. Grounds maintenance was reduced. Reductions were made in long distance phone service, postage, supplies, materials, and travel. System insurance coverage was renegotiated; a new alarm system that was installed in FY2009 resulted in lower monthly monitoring costs. We have reduced current costs in every possible way.

We have not replaced any vehicles since 2005, delivery vans are driven to higher mileage numbers. All out-of-state travel was cut from the budget. The System no longer offers registration costs coverage to members for attending state institutes. All staff refresh amenities were cut: water cooler, coffee, etc. The System no longer has professional association institutional membership; professional association membership dues for professional staff were reduced. There are no allotments for furniture, computers, vehicles, or major maintenance.

The System has actively moved more than 800 individual email accounts from LCLS support to other service providers. We now use WordPress (open source software) for the LCLS Web site.

Four southern Library Systems have been working more closely together to provide support to a wider range of member libraries. We have worked hard to help member libraries be comfortable in providing for themselves much of the support previously provided by the System. With the technology available to all of us, many things that were once intimidating are now second nature.

In addition to the steps already taken, the upcoming fiscal year budget incorporated further reductions, some already mentioned. We have completely cut the collection/materials line item. The System's hours of business will be 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Delivery will leave the System at 8:30 am instead of 8:00 am.

We strive to maintain service to a community that depends on us for structural support. We admit and regret that these necessary changes will negatively impact service. However, we remain dedicated to our mission to ***advance libraries in successfully serving the evolving needs of their communities***. We will continue to provide courier delivery services. GateNet members have approved a reimbursement amount that will allow LLSAP services to remain steady.

Don't count Systems out. In the coming year all Systems will be meeting to discuss restructuring across the state. It is our hope that some semblance of System services can survive in order to reach better days in the future.

It has been my distinct pleasure to serve the LCLS community. Working at the System has been challenging yet fulfilling. I have done everything I can to stabilize the System's fiscal abilities. It is heartbreaking, however, to see what you, I, and many others have worked so hard to build being eroded due to the inability of the State to meet its appropriated obligations. I have been honored to work with an incredibly talented and dedicated staff that truly is devoted to the idea of resource sharing and cooperation as one of their core values.

We all have a difficult duty ahead of us as we work collectively to keep the System afloat in order to transform to the next iteration of Illinois library systems.

An Additional Word Regarding the System's Donations Campaign:

Our most valuable and direct service to the citizens of Illinois is delivery of library materials. However, it is also one of our most expensive. We do not want to, nor are we able to, pass these costs on to our member libraries, but we do need to cover expenses as much as possible. To that end, we will be seeking donations from library users, encouraging them to make donations online or through the mail. The campaign starts right away. Let us know if you have questions or want to know how to help.

Lewis and Clark Director