

Justification of the State Library Agencies Survey Items

Part A. State Library Agency Identification

These are basic identification items such as name, address, telephone number, and web address of the StLA, the name of the chief officer and respondent to the survey, and the state fiscal year reporting period for which data are provided. These items are necessary for survey processing, including mail-out, edit follow-up, and file maintenance.

Part B. Governance

Question 1 asks for the StLAs administrative location in state government. The location and organizational structure of the StLA in state government differs across the states. Organizational changes in state government may affect the StLAs' governance structure. These data are necessary to complete the national profile of StLAs.

Part C. Allied Operations, State Resource Centers, State Reference/Information Service Centers, and State Centers for the Book

Question 2 asks whether any allied operations are combined with the StLA. This information is important in measuring the scope of services and responsibilities of the StLA to state government in areas not ordinarily considered a state library agency function. The role of StLAs in serving the needs of state government varies across the states. Some StLAs have primary responsibility for maintaining state archives, providing legislative and reference services to state employees, and managing state government records. StLA staffing patterns, level of funding, and other resources will vary depending on the number and type of allied operations. These data help complete the profile of each StLA regarding special operations.

Question 3 asks whether the StLA contracts with a local public library or academic library to serve as a state resource center or reference/information service center. This question is important to assess the different ways in which StLAs provide library services to the public. StLAs may provide library services through their StLA outlets only, via contracts with public or academic libraries only, or by both methods. This question will provide useful descriptive information of their varied service arrangements.

Question 4 asks whether the StLA hosts or provides any funding to a State Center for the Book. This information is an important indication of an StLA's level of commitment to the Center for the Book program sponsored by the Library of Congress that promotes books, reading, literacy, and libraries.

Part D. Services to Libraries and Systems

Question 5 asks which services the StLA provides to different types of libraries or library cooperatives in the state. StLAs play an important leadership role in the development of library services statewide. They also directly provide some library services and programs. These items help enumerate the type of services provided and the types of libraries served by the StLA, providing a national profile of StLA services to libraries and library cooperatives. This information also helps complete the picture of public library service in the state.

Part E. Public Service Hours, Outlets, and User Groups

Question 6 requests the total hours open during a typical week for all StLA outlets combined, regardless of whom they serve, as a measure of their total library service activity. Question 7 requests the total hours that the main outlet is open, due to its primary significance.

Question 8 asks for the total number of StLA outlets, by type of outlet, regardless of whom they serve. This information is primarily collected to complement the outlet data items on the IMLS Public Libraries Survey and contribute to a national picture of public library service.

Question 9 asks for the number of StLA outlets that serve specific user groups, by type of outlet. These items are important as a measure of direct library service by the StLA to specific groups of state residents. Historically, StLAs have had responsibility for developing or directly providing library services to the blind and physically handicapped, residents of state correctional and other state institutions, state government employees, and the general public. StLAs have varied in user group emphasis, and these items capture their differences, contributing to a national profile of StLAs and their service to various user groups. The type of service outlets open to the general public, one of the user groups, also helps complete the national picture of public library service.

Part F. Collections

Question 10 asks for the size of collections in selected formats in StLA outlets that serve the public or state government employees. These items (with the exception of the item on government documents) complement collection items on the IMLS Public Libraries Survey and thereby help complete the national picture of public library service. The items are important as a measure of the StLAs' collection size and format emphasis. These data are also useful in comparing an StLAs' standing relative to other StLAs in these areas, and thus in developing a national profile of StLAs in this regard.

Data on collection size are used in planning collection budgets, interlibrary loan programs, and cooperative purchasing programs. Government documents are included as a collection format on the StLA survey because they are not always catalogued with other formats and are an important measure of the StLAs' service to state government employees and the general public. Many StLAs maintain significant collections of local, state, and federal documents and serve as state and federal depository libraries.

The collections data on government documents can be used in conjunction with question 11 on the StLAs' status as a depository library as an indicator of StLAs' emphasis on the collection of government documents and the scope of their collections. The work of state government requires extensive collections of state and federal documents to support the functions of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, and special study commissions. The level of an StLA's interlibrary loan activity to government agencies and libraries and the number of staff providing public library services are affected by the StLA's depository status.

Part G. Library Service Transactions

Question 12 asks for total annual library service transactions for StLA outlets that serve the general public or State government employees, by the following type of transactions: circulation, library materials provided to and received from other libraries, reference transactions, and library visits. These items are similar to the service transaction items on the NCES Public Libraries Survey and help to complete the national picture of public library service. The items are also an important measure of the StLA's provision of direct library service to the public. These data are also useful in comparing an StLA's standing relative to other StLAs in these areas, and thus in developing a national profile of StLAs in this regard.

Part H. Library Development Transactions

Question 13 asks for total annual library development transactions of the StLA, of the following types: the number of LSTA and State grants awarded, and the number of continuing education program events and attendance at events. One of the primary missions of StLAs in state law is to develop library services statewide. These items are important indicators of an StLA's library development activity. These data are also useful in the comparative analysis of StLAs' annual grant activity, as measured by the number of grants awarded. The number of staff assigned to library development (Part I, question 14) is an important part of this analysis. This information also contributes to a national profile of StLA activities beyond the traditional library services to the public.

Part I. Staff

Question 14 asks for a breakdown of StLA staff, by the following types of service: administration, library development, library services, and other services. These items provide important information on an StLA's total staff size and distribution by types of library service. These data permit comparative analyses of StLAs' in this regard. The types of services provided by StLAs to libraries and library cooperatives in Part D, when used in association with the staff data in Part I, will provide basic descriptive information on overall staffing levels, organizational emphasis by types of service, and the variety of specific services provided by StLA staff. Selected staff data complement items on the Public Libraries Survey and help complete the national picture of public library service in this regard.

Part J. Revenue and Part K. Expenditures

Questions 15 and 16 in Part J were added to identify the types of libraries for which StLAs administer state funds, to enable consistency checks with various revenue and expenditure data reported in Parts J and K, and to improve the validity and reliability of the data.

Question 17 in Part J asks for StLA revenue, by source and type of revenue. Question 18 in Part K asks for StLA expenditures by source of revenue and type of expenditure. These items are based on those collected by the COSLA survey, which the StLA survey replaced. These items are necessary to maintain continuity between the IMLS StLA Survey, the NCES StLA survey, and the COSLA survey, to permit trend analysis of revenues and expenditures by categories of significance to StLAs. These categories have their origins in state and federal legislation related to StLA functions and responsibilities. StLAs compare their revenue and expenditures to other StLAs of similar size when developing their program plans and budgets. Selected revenue and expenditure items also complement items on the Public Libraries Survey and thus help complete the national picture of public library service. The financial data are also useful to policymakers and library administrators at the federal, state, and local levels, and to library and public policy researchers.

Part L. LSTA State Program Expenditures

Questions 19 and 20 request LSTA state program expenditures by type and by use of expenditure. These categories have their origins in the LSTA legislation, were included on the COSLA survey, and will permit comparative analysis of StLAs' use of federal funds under the LSTA State Program.

Part M. Electronic Services and Information

The electronic measures collected in this part of the survey are an important gauge of the StLA's role and level of responsibility in providing library access and public access to electronic data resources. Electronic services are also an important focus of the LSTA, and the StLA's support of these services should be measured. The activities that StLAs support to promote electronic information sharing need to be identified for policy and planning implications for their local public libraries and for other libraries and library cooperatives that they serve.

Questions 21 to 23 ask whether the StLA supports electronic networking, digitization or digital programs or services, and library access to the Internet. These data are important measures of the types of electronic service provided by an StLA to libraries and library cooperatives, other state agencies, and the public.

Question 24 asks for the number of Internet workstations available to the public in StLA outlets. These data are an important measure of direct service to the public and public access to electronic information via the StLA.

Questions 25 and 26 ask for statewide database licensing expenditures, the type of user group access. Question 27 asks the ways the StLA facilitates electronic access to the holdings of other libraries. Question 28 asks whether the StLA is an applicant for the Universal Service (E-Rate Discount Program). These items are important for assessing the readiness of StLAs to support electronic information resource sharing through database linkages, and for assessing StLAs' developmental emphasis on access to rather than ownership of library materials. This information is valuable in evaluating StLA electronic services and activity relative to other states.