

Justification for Change

3137-0074 Public Libraries Survey

IMLS is requesting a change to a previously approved clearance in order to revise, add and delete data elements. This change is requesting the same expiration date of 12/31/2016.

Previous request abstract:

The Public Libraries Survey has been conducted by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the clearance number 3137-0074, which expires 12/31/2016. Pursuant to P.L. 107-279, this Public Libraries Survey collects annual descriptive data on the universe of public libraries in the U.S. and the Outlying Areas. Information such as public service hours per year, circulation of library books, number of librarians, population of legal service area, expenditures for library collection, programs for children and young adults, staff salary data, and access to technology, etc., would be collected.

Justification for changing, adding and deleting data elements

Change Item 502—Reference Transactions. This item changes the definition giving a more up-to-date description of reference transactions taking place in public libraries today. The definition also gives examples of what would and would not be a reference transaction to count for the survey.

Add New Item 652—Wireless Sessions – Annually. This new item will ask libraries, collected at the Administrative Entity (AE) level, to report the number of wireless sessions provided by the library wireless service annually. Rationale: Wireless internet service is a key and increasing service of libraries. It makes sense to have a national statistic regarding the level of service to monitor trends and to inform local, state and national broadband policies and initiatives. The information would come from wireless service providers and/or software. We will have more information after next year's FY2014 PLS submission (Jan – Aug 2015) on whether the burden will increase after collecting the information this year. We are expecting a majority of the states will be able to submit this information for the FY2014 PLS survey. All states are expected to submit for the FY2015 PLS Survey (Jan – Aug 2016).

Delete Item 710—Metropolitan Status Code. Previously obtained by the states, IMLS would obtain the Metropolitan Status Code during the geocoding process of the data in the compilation phase of the survey cycle. The C_MSA data will be placed on the file for release. Because this information would be added to the file during post-processing, this item would no longer appear in WebPLUS online submission tool, thus reducing respondent burden.

Approved FY 2014 PLS Data Elements

Add New Data Element:

1. Wireless Sessions – Annually

Definition: Report the number of wireless sessions provided by the library wireless service annually.

Rationale: Wireless internet service is a key and increasing service of libraries. It makes sense to have a national statistic regarding the level of service to monitor trends and to inform local, state and national broadband policies and initiatives. The information would come from wireless service providers and/or software.

This data element will be # 652 under “Other Electronic Information” beginning with the FY2014 PLS federal survey

Change Data Element:

1. Reference Transaction

New Definition:

Reference Transactions are information consultations in which library staff recommend, interpret, evaluate, and/or use information resources to help others to meet particular information needs.

A reference transaction includes information and referral service as well as unscheduled individual instruction and assistance in using information sources (including web sites and computer-assisted instruction). Count Readers Advisory questions as reference transactions.

Information sources include (a) printed and non-printed material; (b) machine-readable databases (including computer-assisted instruction); (c) the library's own catalogs and other holdings records; (d) other libraries and institutions through communication or referral; and (e) persons both inside and outside the library.

When a staff member uses information gained from previous use of information sources to answer a question, the transaction is reported as a reference transaction even if the source is not consulted again.

If a contact includes both reference and directional services, it should be reported as one reference transaction. Duration should not be an element in determining whether a transaction is a reference transaction.

NOTE: It is essential that libraries do not include directional transactions in the report of reference transactions. Directional transactions include giving instruction for locating staff, library users, or physical features within the library. Examples of directional transactions include, “Where is the

reference librarian? Where is Susan Smith? Where is the rest room? Where are the 600s? Can you help me make a photocopy?"

If an annual count of reference transactions is unavailable, count reference transactions during a typical week or weeks, and multiply the count to represent an annual estimate. [If the sample is done four times a year, multiply totals by 13, if done twice a year multiply by 26, if done only annually, multiply by 52.] A "typical week" is a time that is neither unusually busy nor unusually slow. Avoid holiday times, vacation periods for key staff, or days when unusual events are taking place in the community or in the library. Choose a week in which the library is open its regular hours.

Definition as of FY 2013 PL Survey:

A reference transaction is an information contact which involves the knowledge, use, recommendations, interpretation, or instruction in the use of one or more information sources by a member of the library staff. It includes information and referral services. Information sources include printed and non-printed materials, machine-readable databases, catalogs and other holdings records, and, through communication or referral, other libraries and institutions and people inside and outside the library. The request may come in person, by phone, by fax, or by mail, electronic mail, or through live or networked electronic reference service from an adult, a young adult, or a child.

Do not count directional transactions or questions of rules or policies. Examples of directional transactions are "Where are the children's books?" and "I'm looking for a book with the call number 811.2G." An example of a question of rules or policies is "Are you open until 9:00 tonight?"

Note: If an annual count of reference transactions is unavailable, determine an annual estimate by counting reference transactions during a typical week in October and multiply the count by 52. A "typical week" is a time that is neither unusually busy nor unusually slow. Avoid holiday times, vacation periods for key staff, or days when unusual events are taking place in the community or in the library. Choose a week in which the library is open its regular hours. Include seven consecutive calendar days, from Sunday through Saturday (or whenever the library is usually open).

Delete Data Element:

1. 710 Metropolitan Status Code

IMLS would obtain the Metropolitan Status Code during the geocoding process of the data in the compilation phase of the survey cycle. The C_MSA data will be placed on the file for release. This item would not appear in WebPLUS.

Definition:

Select one of the following. Bookmobiles should report the code which best describes their primary service area.

Note: Contact the State Data Center for specific information about Metropolitan Areas in your state.

CC—Central City. The largest central city and, in some cases, up to two additional central cities are included in the title of the Metropolitan Area; there also are central cities that are not included in a Metropolitan Area title. A Metropolitan Area central city does not include any part of that city that extends outside the Metropolitan Area boundary.

NC—Metropolitan Area, but Not Within Central City Limits. A large population nucleus, together with adjacent communities that have a high degree of economic and social integration with that nucleus. Some Metropolitan Areas are defined around two or more nuclei. Each Metropolitan Area must contain a place with a minimum population of 50,000 or a Census Bureau-defined urbanized area and a total Metropolitan Area population of at least 100,000 (75,000 in New England). A Metropolitan Area comprises one or more central counties. (Independent cities are considered county equivalents.) A Metropolitan Area may also include one or more outlying counties that have close economic and social relationships with the central county. An outlying county must have a specified

level of commuting to the central counties and also must meet certain standards regarding metropolitan character, such as population density, urban population, and population growth. In New England, Metropolitan Areas are composed of cities and towns rather than whole counties.

NO—Not in a Metropolitan Area.