



December 2019

Dear Chief Officer:

I am writing to request your participation in the Public Libraries Survey (PLS) for **fiscal year (FY) 2019** conducted by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) with support from the American Institutes for Research (AIR) as our data collection agent. The FY 2019 data collection will open on January 8, 2020.

The PLS is an annual survey of approximately 9,300 public libraries in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the outlying areas. The survey requests descriptive information about public libraries, including staffing, revenues, expenditures, circulation, collections, public service hours, and electronic resources. Your participation will increase the availability of these data to interested users in the public and private sectors. The PLS is administered as a cooperative effort of the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) and IMLS.

AIR sent the FY 2019 PLS User’s Guide to your State Data Coordinator (SDC) this week. States have been placed into one of three reporting groups (see table below), based on their fiscal cycles and extraordinary reporting hardship, in order to stagger data submissions and thus enable timelier processing and release of the data file and survey report.

| Reporting group and fiscal cycle                            | States and U.S. territories  | Survey due date |
|---|--|-----------------|
| <b>Group #1</b><br>(July–June)                              | AK, AZ, CA, CT, DE, GA, HI, IA, KY, MA, MD, MO, MT, NC, NM, NV, OK, OR, RI, SC, TN, VA, WV, WY   | April 17, 2020  |
| <b>Group #2</b><br>(October–September,<br>January–December) | AL, AR, CO, DC, FL, ID, IL, IN, KS, LA, ME, MI, MN, MS, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, SD, UT, VT, WA, WI, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands | July 24, 2020   |
| <b>Group #3*</b><br>(January–December)                      | TX   | August 14, 2020 |

\*Extraordinary reporting hardship

The FY 2019 PLS has a firm due date of April 17, 2020 for Group 1 states, July 24, 2020 for Group 2 states, and August 14, 2020 for the Group 3 state. No state data submission will be accepted after the due date specified for the state. If you cannot submit data for all of your public libraries by the due date, please submit the data you do have available instead of not submitting data at all.

The Francis Keppel Award for timely and accurate submission of data is based on a point system covering timely response to the original submission and post-submission processing. States that accumulate at least 16 points out of the maximum 20 points will receive the award. The point system is defined in an attachment to the email sent to the SDC.

IMLS and AIR will work cooperatively with your SDC, who is the contact person for the survey, to ensure the quality and timeliness of data for your state. AIR will conduct data reviews and send their findings of highly questionable data to the coordinator for review and corrections. Any highly questionable data that are not revised or verified as correct within three weeks will be deleted and imputed.

You will receive an email from AIR this week with your login credentials to access the PLS Web Portal where you will see the status of the survey, review the data, and certify the survey. After the SDC has locked the survey and replied to AIR about any post-lock review questions, you will receive an email informing you that the data are locked and ready for your review and certification. Once you certify the data, you and the SDC will receive a confirmation email that the data have been certified and are final. (In prior years, you were asked to certify the data before AIR conducted the post-lock review; the sequence has been changed this year to ensure you are reviewing and certifying the final, edited data for your state or territory.)

The FY 2019 data files and survey report will be released on the IMLS website at [www.imls.gov](http://www.imls.gov). IMLS will also make the data available through web-based tools, such as the IMLS data catalog.

If you have any questions regarding this data collection, please contact the PLS Help Desk at [PLS@air.org](mailto:PLS@air.org) or 1-866-744-5746, option 1, between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm Eastern time.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no person should be asked to respond to a collection of information unless such collection displays a valid OMB control number. For this information collection, the OMB control number is **3137-0074**, which expires **1/31/2020**. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 84.9 hours per response, including the time to review instructions, search existing data resources, gather the data needed, and complete and review the information collection. If you have any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this collection of information, please send them to Marisa Pelczar at [mpelczar@imls.gov](mailto:mpelczar@imls.gov).

Sincerely,



Kathryn K. Matthew  
Director  
Institute of Museum and Library Services