NN/LM SCR Public Library Regional Advisory Council
April 10, 2012
The Texas Medical Center Library

<u>Attending</u>

RAC Members:
Carolyn Ashcraft
Arkansas State Library, Little Rock, AR

Ashley Parker
Malvern-Hot Spring County Library, Malvern, AR

Erin Chesnutt
Beauregard Parish Library, DeRidder, LA

Rebecca Hamilton
State Library of Louisiana, Baton Rouge, LA (attended via phone conference)

Linda Morgan Davis
ABC Libraries, Albuquerque, NM

Carmella Lee
Thomas Branigan Memorial Library, Las Cruces, NM

Susan McVey
Oklahoma Department of Libraries, Oklahoma City, OK

Suanne M. Wymer
Tulsa City-County Library, Tulsa, OK

Denise Milton
Jasper Public Library, Jasper, TX

Peggy D. Rudd
Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin, TX

NN/LM SCR staff: Michelle Malizia, Associate Director; Emily Hurst, Ruicha Mishra, Cheryl
Rowan, and Karen Vargas

<u>Overview</u>

The inaugural meeting of the NN/LM SCR Public Library Regional Advisory Council (PLRAC)
started at 8:30 am on April 10, 2012 at The Texas Medical Center Library. Following

introductions, Michelle Malizia presented an overview of the NLM and NN/LM SCR. Ms. Malizia expressed that the SCR has a keen interest in the needs of public libraries as frontline contact points with the public's health information research. She reiterated the charge of the committee, which is:

The NN/LM SCR recognizes the crucial role public librarians play in assisting the public in locating health information. The Public Library Council will assist the NN/LM SCR in enhancing its health information programming for public libraries, in particular with regard to:

- Training topics and methods
- Improvements to funding opportunities offered by the NN/LM SCR
- Collaboration possibilities between public librarians and hospitals, health science libraries, emergency responders, and health-related community-based organizations
- Support of public libraries' technology needs to improve access to online health

Educational Opportunities

Following brief introductions by the coordinators, PLRAC members were asked to use post-it notes to write down the most important health information needs in their communities. The post-it notes were then put on the wall, and SCR staff organized them into categories of like-comment. Then the categories were read, and a discussion was held about each category. The following comments are arranged from most common to least common:

- Senior health, including: hospice; end of life; uninsured elderly; "sandwich generation" (generation caring for both parents and children); aging baby boomers; information on Alzheimer's
- Child health care, including: infant care; information for new parents, including special emphasis on role of fathers; healthy kids; teen health issues; child development; families with children; expectant mother information
- Teen new-parent information, including: educational tools for teen mothers; at-risk teen parents; teen fathers; health concern changes at point of transition from young adulthood into adulthood
- Easy to understand information, including: bulleted info on cards/brochures that libraries can get into people's hands; health information on all topics for new adult readers who are working with literacy tutors; drug/supplement information at low literacy level; search terms for low levels of literacy
- Health information for poor or homeless on what is available to them, including Medicaid
- Information on disabilities and special needs, including autism
- Information on where to find free health information, including public libraries, free internet, and high quality websites
- Nutrition and healthy cooking for different cultures (ex. Soul food for diabetics)
- Meth lab dangers
- Ways to look up diseases from the symptoms (symptom checkers)
- Information in foreign languages (beyond MedlinePlus)
- Virtual Doctor/patient interaction (video/skype, etc)

- Information on specific diseases and conditions: Cancer, heart disease, strokes, diabetes, pain management, obesity

Karen Vargas described the consumer health classes that are currently offered by the SCR. Based on the list of classes and their previous list of their communities' health information needs, PLRAC members were asked to write down what topics are missing from our current list, what they would expect to see but did not see. Using the same process as before, below are the suggested class topics.

- New parents: Healthy living for children and parents; online tools for healthy living in families; child development; successful teen parenting (TX has highest teen pregnancy rate in the country); early childhood diagnostic screenings and mental health
- Staying up to date with connectivity and technology: Multiple medias
- Medical partnerships: Best way to approach potential partners
- Working with people with Autism Spectrum Disorders, and helping parents explore resources to cope with broad spectrum
- Exercise options for different ages; especially online tools and apps to help keep you motivated (like the zombie running app)
- Resources for caregivers/elder care
- How to stay mentally sharp as you age
- Hospice and End of Life Issues
- Health insurance: understanding benefits and policy language, including Medicare and Medicaid
- Cancer resources
- Rural health: public health and collaboration
- Outreach to underserved, not just minority communities
- Good nutrition tips
- How to train the underserved on basic computer use
- Choosing medical professionals
- Women's health issues
- Health information for veterans
- Health information needs in disasters
- Pain management
- Training literacy tutors about how to work with their literacy students on health topics (canned materials or scripts)
- Health statistics
- How to cope with disabilities
- Providing health information in the middle of a disaster; having core resources at fingertips, outreach to shelters

Sometimes the SCR does really well in attracting people to classes but sometimes not. The PLRAC members were asked what were some reasons that people might not come to classes? Responses included:
- Libraries being understaffed—some libraries need to close in order to travel for training

- Travel costs were too high or frozen
- Attendance depends on the support of the administration for training
- Perhaps the general public should be invited to the programs
- Training saturation/fatigue
- Classes might not meet the CE requirements of the states
- It is possible that the word is still not getting out to the right people - the SCR needs to provide multiple ways of communicating information, including written letters
- In many cases a librarian needs one on one communication to attend a program
- Timing—are the classes held at a variety of times to accommodate different schedules?

The SCR asked people from each state to find out if the states had any Continuing Education (CE) requirements for public librarians. If so, perhaps NN/LM SCR training could be offered as a part of state certification requirements.
- Texas has a 10 hour per year CE requirement for public library directors
- Louisiana public librarians have a 5 year renewal of their certification
- Oklahoma Library association offers Continuing Education credit, but it is voluntary
- There is no CE requirements for librarians in Arkansas
- In New Mexico, the public library directors need to be certified by the states

The SCR is planning to increase the number of online classes that are offered in the Region. The PLRAC members were asked the following questions: Do public librarians in your states like to attend online classes? What formats (e.g. webinar, self-paced, synchronous, asynchronous) work best? What makes online classes work or not work? What is the optimal length of an online class? All things being equal (e.g. funding, staffing), do people in your state prefer online or in-person classes?

The committee members responded that in general librarians preferred face-to-face classes. Attending face-to-face classes helps to fulfill the networking needs of the librarians and in the case of rural librarians, diminishes their feelings of isolation. Some libraries only send one librarian to face-to-face classes, and they come back to train the other library staff. In some states, librarians from neighboring libraries will send someone to volunteer so that someone at a small library can leave for training.

Online training can be too passive—participants are often less responsive. However, it can be useful to have online training that takes place at the participants' own pace. If the class in a synchronous webinar format, many librarians cannot tie up their only phone line for the webinar, or cannot do it while staffing the reference desk. Some libraries have no private space to attend an online class. Bandwidth for webinar-type classes can also be a problem at smaller, rural libraries.

Self-paced tutorials or archived webinars with follow-up exercises after the training can solve some of these problems. Additionally, archived classes can be passed around to everyone. Texas is a partner with Web Junction as a way of doing distance education – maybe the SCR can collaborate with Web Junction. Co-promoting the services of the state libraries will encourage

the state libraries to work with the NN/LM SCR. It was suggested that a certificate for participating in a sequence of classes could be helpful (such as CHIS). One committee member suggested combining face-to-face and distance components together in a class. Another suggestion was to use directed readings before the face-to-face training to amplify the curriculum. Encouraging the class to be a cohort can increase sharing together in the future. Lastly, one member expressed that as people become more comfortable with online classes, they will become easier to embrace.

Funding

Following lunch and a tour of The Texas Medical Center Library (including the branch of Harris County Public Library located within The TMC Library), Ms. Malizia presented an overview of the funding opportunities provided by the South Central Region that could apply to public libraries. She asked the PLRAC members which ones appealed to them for their libraries. The response was "all of them!" She asked which groups their institutions would want to collaborate with if the SCR would help to make the connections. Some suggestions were medical libraries, academic libraries and their state and regional departments of health and human services.

When asked what other kinds of awards could be offered, it was suggested that it would be helpful for the SCR to actually provide a "Collaboration Award." This kind of award would allow state libraries to partner with a local or regional libraries or other group. That could be especially helpful in emergency planning. A planning award was also suggested. This award would allow the recipients time to brainstorm, establish relationships and address barriers before starting a project.

Another suggestion for funding is associated with a public access technology benchmarking project being developed by a coalition funded by the Gates Foundation, and including ALA and the state libraries of Oklahoma and Texas. One of the benchmarks being developed is the Health and Wellness benchmark. One suggestion was that the SCR offer funding that will support meeting the Health and Wellness benchmark when it is finalized.

Ms. Malizia asked when were the best and worst times for public libraries to write proposals. Committee members replied that in general January through March is a good time to take time to write proposals, and that the worst time is the summer because most public libraries have a time-consuming summer reading program for children. In addition, it would not be good to offer funding due right after the holidays.

The PLRAC members were asked to write down on post-its specific barriers public libraries have in applying for funding, so that the SCR would better understand how to increase funded project applications from public libraries. Member responses were:
- Fear of failure
- Inferiority complex (feeling like idea is unworthy of funding)

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- Not enough time to write a proposal
- Lack of grant writing expertise and experience
- Not enough staff and time to coordinate and administer a funded project
- Fear that the library resources that are there at the time of application, will not there when the funding arrives
- No dedicated grant-writer on staff who understands and can articulate need
- There are still many tiny rural libraries with no MLIS degree librarian
- Not understanding how an award could help their library
- Some institutions have complicated processes to accept and spend money. For example, some public libraries have to put funding through their Friends group (501c3) or the money will go to the state
- Fear of taking on something else—with shift to e-government, public libraries are inundated with providing non-traditional services that are time consuming and complicated
- Awards do not have enough money for the amount of work
- Fear that there will be too much reporting required
- Competing priorities - need for administrative support for the project so that time can be taken away from other duties/projects
- Building partnerships, fostering a sense of ownership with collaborative entities
- Lack of overarching long-range planning
- Lack of access to technology necessary for award
- Don't have the collaborative relationships in place

<u>State-based considerations</u>

In this section, Ms. Malizia asked the RAC members about issues that affect each state. The first question was what kinds of training evaluation are used in each state. Texas State Library and Archives uses outcome based measurement/assessment. Three months after the training a short survey is sent out to training participants asking if they used the knowledge they learned. Arkansas is just starting to have an IMLS-based evaluation system. In Oklahoma, the computer lab classes have an outcome-based assessment in which follow-up questions are asked several months later.

Ms. Malizia asked what the priorities are for each state. The 5-year LSTA funding application is due June 30, 2012, which was a major priority for all five states.
- In Texas, there is a big issue for technology management and keeping up with changes in technology, due to some major funding cuts for technology in libraries.
- Arkansas' priorities include public library development, seniors, and a "back to basics" philosophy.
- In Oklahoma, because of the recent BTOP awards, there is a priority for video conferencing at public libraries and telemedicine. Also introducing new services for public library users and training of public library trustees.

When asked about specific public library priorities and initiatives, the following items were stated:

- Adult education
- Programming
- RFID
- Changing ILS systems
- Loaning Kindles (Gizmo Checkouts)
- Kilowatt meter checkout
- Remaining relevant through technology
- Play-away games
- Downloadable ebooks and audio
- Mobile devices
- Ebook licensing
- New laptops/computers
- Technology gap
- Outreach
- Physical space/facility master plan
- Disaster preparation
- Hardware/software backup update
- Staying relevant for community
- Doing needs assessment of community
- Raising funds
- Outcome-based measures for children's programming
- BiblioCommons social discovery system

PLRAC final thoughts

The final question asked was whether or not this Public Library Regional Advisory Council met their expectations, and how it could be improved. Most responses indicated that those attending the meeting felt that their time was used efficiently and that the meeting was better than they had expected. They felt that they learned a lot about the NN/LM SCR, and that while the focus was both specific and productive, there was still enough open ended time.

The next meeting of the Public Library Regional Advisory Council will be held by teleconference in the Fall of 2012.