

Consulting Operational Plan

Overview

Providing professional advice on a wide range of topics is a basic system service that occurs on a daily basis in helping librarians, administrators, and governing bodies provide better service to their clientele. System Consultants must stay current and informed not only on the core services—bibliographic access, continuing education, delivery, interlibrary loan, reciprocal access, reference, technology, and youth services—but also on library legislation, library taxation, collection management, expansion and development of library service, planning, budgeting, certification and recertification, staff management, policy development, grant writing, and many other subjects that may arise.

Administration and Service

The System will provide

- consulting services to the staff and the governing bodies of all member libraries in the core service areas
- consulting services in additional areas by drawing on System staff expertise and experience or assisting the member library in finding an outside source for the information/expertise needed
- member libraries with information on the consulting services and areas of staff expertise through the directory on the System website and by on-going communication through System publications and at meetings and workshops
- consulting services and information by telephone, e-mail, fax, v-tel, site visit, and other appropriate methods
- first response assistance to consulting inquiries, acknowledging requests within two working days. In-depth assistance and expert advice will be offered based on the availability of staff time and expertise. In most cases, the request for consulting services will be provided within five working days or a negotiated time limit.

Staff and Resources

The System will

- employ consultants who hold a Master's Degree from an ALA accredited library program, at least three years' relevant experience in the consultant's designated area of expertise, and demonstrated experience in effective written and oral communication, as well as group process technologies. In other specialties, the System may also employ consultants who hold education qualifications generally accepted by the practitioners of that profession as the minimum acceptable requirement.
- provide each full-time Consultant with at least 30 contact hours annually, and each part-time Consultant with at least the proportional number of

contact hours to attend workshops, seminars, classes, etc. to improve specific skills relevant to his/her consulting assignment.

- provide support for each Consultant to spend at least five days annually attending regional, state, national, or international professional meetings relevant to the consultant's profession.
- strive, as allowed by budgetary constraints, to provide a minimum of three qualified FTE Consultants for the first 100 members and at least one additional Consultant for each additional 50 members or fraction thereof.

Member Library Responsibility

Members are encouraged to:

- share their expertise with their colleagues. Many of the staffs in member libraries have specialized skills and can serve as resource people for other libraries within the System.
- understand the scope of consulting services available from the System.
- help the System identify new or unmet consulting needs, so that they can be addressed in the System plan.