

## **The Survey of State Library Agencies: The Survey and Its Steering Committee**

### **A Statement Approved by the Steering Committee March 20, 2003**

Since 1992, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA), and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) have cooperated in planning and carrying out an NCES survey known as the “Survey of State Library agencies.”<sup>1</sup> Each year, NCES publishes a report of that Survey, *State Library Agencies, Fiscal Year*\_\_\_ (NCES identifies the series as *E.D. Tabs.*) The reports are published on the NCES website.

This document is intended to provide brief background on the Survey and its Steering Committee, summarize its procedures, and be otherwise helpful to the sponsors and participants in the Survey. It updates, and replaces, the February 20, 1998 “prospectus” for the Survey. This document is divided into the following parts:

- I. Why a Survey of State Library Agencies?
  - II. Users of the Survey Results
  - III. Scope of the Survey
  - IV. Process, Organizations, Offices, and People Involved in the Survey
  - V. Charge to the Steering Committee
  - VI. Composition of the Steering Committee
  - VII. Meetings and Other Work of the Steering Committee
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<sup>1</sup> The cooperation is based on the recommendations of COSLA in April 1992, continuing discussions throughout 1992, culminating in the appointment of the State Library Agencies Survey Steering Committee in November 1992.

## **I. Why a Survey of State Library Agencies (StLA)?**

The purpose of the StLA survey is to provide State and Federal policy makers with information about state library agencies.

State library agencies (StLA) are key partners of the U.S. Government in the administration of grants<sup>2</sup> from the Federal government to the states for improvement of library services and other Federal programs aimed at improving research and education in the United States. StLA data have proved to be a necessary complement to NCES data collected regularly on public libraries, academic and school libraries, and educational institutions.

StLA programs and services affect the capacity of thousands of public libraries, academic libraries, school libraries, and special libraries. They help libraries “enhance literacy, strengthen democracy and expand productivity.”<sup>3</sup> This State-Federal cooperation and the leadership of state library agencies is essential in meeting Federal and State goals for library and education services to the people of the United States. It is important that the work of state library agencies be documented in the StLA Survey as part of education statistics.

## **II. Users of the Survey Results:**

The data collected in the StLA Survey are useful to: (1) Chief Officers of State Library Agencies, (2) policy makers in the executive and legislative branches of Federal and state governments, (3) government and library administrators at Federal, state and local levels, (4) the American Library Association staff and members, (5) library and public policy researchers, and (6) the public, journalists, and others.

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<sup>2</sup> Since 1997, the states have received Federal Library Services and Technology Services (LSTA) grants from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under P.L. 104-208. This program succeeded the Federal Library Services and Construction and the Library Services Acts, which had been administered by the U.S. Department of Education and its Office of Library Programs since 1957.

<sup>3</sup> From the theme of the 1991 White House Conference on Library and Information Services, administered by the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and the state library agencies.

### **III. Scope of the Survey**

The survey collects information on the following:

- Inputs and outputs of state library agency<sup>4</sup> services and operations in both direct library services and library development and networking services.
- Resources assigned to such allied operations as archives and records or museum management in those states in which such responsibilities are located in the state library agency<sup>5</sup>. In such instances, data will not include extensive output or operational measurements of such operations.
- StLAs in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. For Hawaii and the District of Columbia (most of whose data are collected and reported in the annual FSCS public library survey), only data on StLA roles and operations are collected and reported in this survey).
- Organizational and governance structure within which the StLA operates and changes taking place within that structure.

### **IV. Process, Organizations, Offices, and People Involved in the Survey:**

Since the first discussions in 1992, the survey has been a joint effort of NCES, COSLA and NCLIS. As the survey has matured, the U.S. Bureau of the Census has been increasingly involved.

NCES funds the StLA Survey as an integral part of its system of education surveys. It produces and publishes the StLA survey reports. NCES also supports, through contracts, Census and NCLIS work for the Survey and the work of the Steering Committee. The NCES staff member who directs the StLA survey approves the questionnaire and definitions.

COSLA formally maintains its interest in the survey through its Research and Statistics Committee). The chair of that COSLA committee (who is appointed by the President of COSLA) is automatically a member of the StLA Steering Committee. The Research and Statistics chair reports regularly to COSLA, encourages Chief Officers to respond promptly to the StLA survey deadlines, and promotes in COSLA, use of the Survey reports and feedback.

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<sup>4</sup> The “state library agency” is that department, agency or unit of state government designated by law or the Governor as “the state library administrative agency” for the purpose of administering LSTA funds. The functions of such agencies vary among the states. The common characteristic is that it is the state agency responsible for statewide library development; other functions, These may include operation of a library for government users and/or the public, network operation, interlibrary loan service, “virtual library” services, etc..

<sup>5</sup> This is not an archives or museum study. The survey collects operations expenditure data from each StLA. In the case of states in which the StLA operates the State Archives, for instance (as does Arizona, Connecticut, Virginia, and seven other states), it collects expenditures data for Archives services. Expenditures for Allied Operations are summed in the NCES E.D. Tabs..

In effect, COSLA vests its corporate interest in the survey in its Research and Statistics Committee and its Chair. The chair of COSLA Research and Statistics Committee informs and consults with the COSLA committee and with chief officers at appropriate points. Both the StLA Steering Committee and COSLA see him/her as COSLA's official representative to the StLA Steering Committee.

NCLIS, through its Executive Director and staff, advises NCES and provides liaison with the library community for library statistics and research, public policy issues, and the surveys, including the StLA survey. The Executive Director or other staff he/she designates, advises on appointments to the Steering Committee, maintains contact with various constituent groups, plans library statistics forums, and performs other work to ensure a timely, useful library surveys and use of their data.

Census staff send out the survey, collect data and otherwise assist in the administration of the survey.

#### **V. Charge to the Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee for the NCES Survey of State Library Agencies:

- identifies the issues for which the survey will produce policy-level information and data,
- develops policies for the survey,
- determines the parameters of the survey,
- advises on data elements and definitions
- advises on formats for presentation of data and the analyses expected in the report, both in printed and electronic forms
- evaluates, from time to time, the usefulness, timeliness, format, and impact of the reports
- otherwise assists in planning and carrying out the StLA survey
- recommends special studies and papers to analyze survey data for public policy research, and encourages such research.

#### **VI. Composition of the Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee for the survey includes representatives of several organizations, interests and type of StLA. These include:

(a) **Four Chief Officers including** the Chair of the COSLA Research and Statistics Committee who is "the official COSLA representative"). These four generally represent different types of organizational and governance structures, such as:

- (a- 1) Independent board or commission
  - Cabinet agency
  - An education department
  - Other state department (secretary of state, cultural, economic and tourism, administrative or general service, etc.), and
- (a- 2) StLAs which operate a major reference library,
- (c) Large and small StLAs,

- (d) StLAs which operate other-than-library functions, and
- (e) The demography of COSLA, with attention to geographic location, gender, tenure, and interest in statistics.

**(b) Representatives of:**

- ALA (the director of the ALA Office of Research)
- ASCLA (usually the President or Past President of the State Library Agencies or Networking Sections)
- NCES (the Directors of the two NCES units responsible for the StLA survey, the Survey Director, and such other staff as NCES may assign)
- NCLIS (the Executive Director and staff as assigned)
  - CENSUS (one or two Governments Bureau program or technical staff who work with the Survey, as may be designated by NCES)
  - IMLS - Institute of Library and Museum Services (the Director or a deputy as the Institute Director may assign)
  - FSCS Data Coordinators (two individuals appointed by NCES, drawn from the FSCS leadership who have responsibility in their states for providing StLA survey data, appointed by NCES in consultation with NCLIS)

**(c) Other expert persons as appropriate and determined by NCES.**

NCES, in consultation with NCLIS, appoints the Chair and the Vice Chair of the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee Chair and Vice Chair will be the Chair or past-Chair of the COSLA Research and Statistics Committee or other chief officer.

**VII. Meetings and other Work of the Committee Members**

The Steering Committee generally meets twice a year. The Chair may establish task forces for particular responsibilities. Members are expected to complete most of their work by mail, phone or e-mail. The Chair of the Steering Committee is an *ex-officio* member of each task force.

Officers: The Chair presides at Steering Committee meetings; The Vice Chair presides in the event of the absence of the Chair.

**VIII. Steering Committee Procedures**

(a) The Chair determines the agenda for meetings with in consultation with NCES and the Chair of the COSLA Committee on Research and Statistics. The Chair solicits suggestions in advance from all members of the Steering Committee.

(b) The agenda will be mailed in advance of a meeting, with accompanying material. Each member is expected to read this material in advance of the meeting.

(c) Individual members responsible for discussion items should furnish materials in advance. Individual members who expect to propose positions, definitions or changes should bring text to the meeting, with sufficient copies for each member of the Steering Committee.

(d) Much of the advice, decisions, determines, and other work of the Steering Committee is achieved through consensus; the Committee's business therefore requires few votes. When a formal vote on a matter is required, and the Chair or other presiding individual calls for such a vote, the following count of representatives is followed:

COSLA - four votes

ALA - one vote

ASCLA - one vote

NCES - three votes

NCLIS - one vote

Census - one vote

IMLS - one vote

FSCS Data Coordinators - two votes

Other experts as appointed by NCES - one vote each (not to exceed two)

In the case of a tie, the Chair or other presiding individual casts the deciding vote. In each case of a vote, the motion subject to voting shall be presented in writing by a member of the Steering Committee and be seconded by a member of the Steering Committee.

The Chair shall see that a record is kept of each meeting, including the names of persons present. Notes of the meetings shall be concise, recording actions and formally developed consensus statements, but not attempt to recapitulate the statements of individual members.

#### **IX. Steering Committee Policy**

The Steering Committee is committed to appropriate consistency in library data among NCES surveys. At such time as an overarching NCES committee may be established for coordinating surveys with library components, such a committee should include the Chair of the StLA Steering Committee and the COSLA representative.