

**American Library Association
Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP)
APPLICATION NARRATIVE**

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

I want recognition that my job is important, that my work is valued, that I am valued as a human being. This is more important than money. I want to be trusted that I will do what I'm paid for. I need pride in myself and my job.¹

According to the 2004 statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) 230,843 workers are employed in U.S. academic and public libraries. Of these, 160,150 (69%) workers are library support staff (LSS) holding jobs not requiring a Master's Degree in Library Science (MLS).² This project addresses LSS needs for a national certification program to help the profession standardize expectations for LSS, help the large number of LSS master critical job competencies; provide educators with guidance for training curriculums; and help employers articulate job requirements.

In 2005, the ALA Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment (HRDR) and members of the Library Support Staff Interest Round Table (LSSIRT) received responses from 3,318 LSS to a survey about professional development and certification.³ Eighty-six percent of respondents thought that a certification program would be beneficial. Seventy-six percent said that nationally recognized professional standards were important and 66% support a national certification program to help them provide better service and grow in their chosen profession.

This project will design, test, and implement the first national, competency-based, LSS Certification Program (LSSCP) for LSS in public and academic libraries. LSSCP will also include staff who are known as or may call themselves paraprofessionals, library technicians, library assistants and associates, para-librarians, etc. The project does not include school LSS because many states have training and licensing requirements that differ from the potential requirements of the LSSCP. The project also excludes LSS in special libraries. Their national association, the Special Library Association, will be examining the results of the ALA project as indicated by the attached letter of support. Project directors will provide regular updates and information to all library groups.

Although many states offer certification programs that are open to LSS, these programs are not consistent regarding competencies, assessment, policies, requirements, or procedures. Few states offer reciprocity to certificate holders from other states. Most of these programs are not competency-based and only New Mexico's program requires an assessment of the certificate applicant. The LSSCP will not supplant state programs; instead, the national certification will supplement them by offering a national credential and an additional acknowledgment of individual accomplishment. In addition, states may choose to adopt all or parts of the national model to replace or modify their certificate program(s).

The LSSCP will also not supplant the approximately 50 Library Technical Assistant (LTA) programs in junior colleges, which lead to certificates or associate's degrees. The LSSCP will not offer courses, but identify education providers. LTA programs are important education providers for LSS and depending on the LTA curriculum, students could be eligible for immediate LSS certification upon graduation.

¹ Suzanne Mahmoodi and Kathleen Weibel, *Paraprofessionals: What Are They Doing? What Are the Trends? How Do They Get to A Desired Future; A Report of Focus Groups* (unpublished, 1991).

² National Center for Education Statistics, *2004 Academic Libraries Survey* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2004), <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2007/2007301.pdf> (accessed December 11, 2006). National Center for Education Statistics, *2004 Federal-State Cooperative System Survey* (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, 2004), http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/libraries/pub_data.asp (accessed December 11, 2006).

³ American Library Association, Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment. *Library Support Staff Interests Round Table Certification Study* (unpublished, 2005).

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Background: The efforts of ALA to establish a LSSCP span many years. In 1991, working on a grant for ALA, Kathleen Weibel, former Director of Staff Development at the Chicago Public Library, wrote an issue paper regarding certification. She noted that, “There is no standard educational credential required for library support staff positions. There is also no standard set of competencies for categories of support staff positions although competency statements do exist at the local library level.”⁴

Also in 1991, Suzanne Mahmoodi, former Director of the Minnesota State Library and a continuing education consultant, and Kathleen Weibel held 49 focus groups with 500 support staff in 11 states.⁵ They recorded the participants’ desire to advance in their careers through a non-academic path, to learn about library services and operations, and to have access to learning opportunities specific to LSS needs. Participants weighed the pros and cons of certification, and the need for and the difficulty in establishing standards. They said, “If there is to be certification for paraprofessionals, it should be national, recognized, and tied to compensation. It should be based on competencies, and criteria should weigh heavily on work experience and expertise; it should not be linked to a degree.” Finally, participants felt that certification would help with mobility, recognition, and salary improvement.

The 2003 ALA Congress on Professional Education III (COPE III) focused on support staff. One of the major recommendations was, “ALA, in cooperation with LSSIRT and other appropriate stakeholders, should study the feasibility of developing a voluntary national support staff certification program administered by the ALA-APA. Successful state models should be studied and access, practicality, and quality should be included in the considerations.”⁶

The Congress also asked that ALA establish competencies and “study the feasibility of establishing a process for the approval or endorsement of continuing education programs for library support staff.”⁷ In 2005, ALA demonstrated its continued commitment to LSS certification in its strategic plan, *ALAhead to 2010*, which contains four objectives related to an LSSCP. These are:

- Increase public awareness of the value and impact of librarians and library staff;
- Increase availability of and access to continuing education and continuous learning opportunities for librarians and library staff;
- Establish standards for educational programs for library support staff;
- Support efforts to increase career development opportunities for all librarians and library staff.

Also in 2003, the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) granted funds to the Western Council of State Libraries (WCSL) to develop a competency based certification program for “library practitioners”, public library directors who do not have a master’s degree in library and information studies. The WCSL will implement this program in January 2007. The WCSL will provide the project with invaluable experience with developing competencies and a certification program, and gaining support from many stakeholder groups.

Challenges: As Larry Oberg, former university librarian at Willamette University in Salem, Oregon, notes, “staff utilization, role definition and articulation, task overlap, educational requirements, certification, and status have been cantankerous issues within the library profession for most of this century and remain largely

⁴ Kathleen Weibel, *Certification for Support Staff, World Book-ALA Goal Award Project on Library Support Staff, Issue Paper #1*, American Library Association, Office for Library Personnel Resources (1991), <http://www.ala.org/ala/hrdrbucket/3rdcongressonpro/certification.htm> (accessed December 12, 2006).

⁵ Mahmoodi and Weibel, *Paraprofessionals*.

⁶ American Library Association. *Third Congress on Professional Education: Focus on Library Support Staff (COPE III) Implementation Report*, American Library Association (2003), <http://www.ala.org/ala/hrdrbucket/3rdcongressonpro/3rdcongressprofessional.htm> (accessed December 11, 2006).

⁷ American Library Association, COPE III.

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unresolved today.”⁸ Other professionals have faced the same difficult issues, but most professional associations have adopted statements that clearly describe the various responsibilities of positions within the professional field. In many professions, laws also govern these responsibilities. For example, most states have laws regarding the administration of treatment by physician’s assistants. The library field lacks an accepted, articulated statement of the differences in staffing categories. This project’s outcomes will help solve this perennial issue by establishing well defined, agreed upon LSS competencies. This activity will help clarify the roles of all workers, professional and support, in the library profession.

Dorothy Morgan, driving force behind the New York State Library Assistant Association Certificate Program has said “Certification is not a substitute or alternative for the MLS, but a catalyst.”⁹

NATIONAL IMPACT AND INTENDED RESULTS

The LSSCP will benefit individual staff, the libraries in which they work, library users and the profession. Certificate holders will have positive proof of their mastery of vocational competencies and a broader understanding of their work/functional area and its role in the library and the field of librarianship. Libraries can hire an employee who has been certified to have a specified body of knowledge and skills. The employer may also use the LSSCP as part of a career ladder in the library.

The LSSCP will result in a core of well-trained LSS, poised to become leaders. Kent Slade, author of “Certification of Support Staff: What Is It, What Does It Do?” asserts, “Certification of library support staff improves performance. Support staff are more confident of their roles in duties. They will be more aware of other functions within the library. When staff members understand the broader picture, service improves and customers are happier.”¹⁰

In an unpublished survey of graduates of the competency-based, Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program (MVCP) for Library Support Staff and their managers, survey respondents indicated what they considered to be the benefits of participation in the MVCP.¹¹ Library managers (82.1%) and MVCP support staff (90.5) felt that user’s needs were better met. Managers (92.7%) and support staff (70.0) felt MVCP graduates had a better understanding of total library operation. Managers (78%) and support staff (70%) felt they were doing their job better and managers (80.5%) and graduates (54.2%) felt they were doing a better job of serving the public.

Because the LSSCP is a voluntary program, the employers of LSS will determine any rewards, benefits, or increased responsibilities given to certificate holders. ALA cannot guarantee any specific reward for completing the program, but believes that employers will recognize the dedication and education of staff members who hold the certificate.

Lastly, the profession will have identified the competencies of support staff and by doing so, implicitly recognized the difference between LSS and the librarians with an MLS. The LSSCP will also define comprehensive areas and skills that support staff should master for their careers. The profession will also benefit through the project’s development of a body of data on how to meet the professional development needs of the largest number of workers in libraries. Currently, statistics and research about meeting the specific continuing education needs of support staff is limited.

⁸ Larry Oberg. “Library Support Staff in an Age of Change: Utilization, Role Definition, and Status.” *ERIC Digest*, EDO-IR-95-4 (May 1995).

⁹ Dorothy Morgan, Jenifer Grady, et al. (personal communication, June 24, 2005).

¹⁰ Kent Slade, “Certification of Support Staff: What Is It, What Does It Do?” *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 36 (Winter 1995): 12-15.

¹¹ Nancy Bolt and Jody Howard, Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program Evaluation Project (unpublished, Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota State Library, 2006).

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DIVERSITY

The LSSCP has, as its potential audience, more than 160,000 people in public and academic libraries of all sizes in the United States. LSS are more reflective of the racial and ethnic diversity of the United States than librarians.¹² In 2000, 11% of librarians with a master's in library science were people of color; and the *total* percentage of African-American, Latino, Asian and Native American graduates of library schools was not quite 13%, despite a 152% increase in people of color nationally between 1990 and 2000. Most MLS librarians (81%) are still white women between 45 and 54 years old. Library assistants had the largest proportion of non-white staff members in 2002 at 29% who reported being of another race: African-American (11%), Asian-Pacific Islander (9%), Latino (7%), Native American/Alaskan (1%), and two or more races (1%).

The Urban Library Program, an IMLS funded project awarded to the St. Paul (MN) Public Library, shows, that a program awarding certification for successful completion attracts a diverse population.

PROJECT METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION PLAN

Project Methodology

ALA will contract with Nancy Bolt and Karen Strege to direct the project. Jenifer Grady, Director, American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA) will assist the project directors.

The project will take three years to complete due to the complexity of developing a national program which must be supported by many stakeholder groups. A year of testing is also necessary to insure that the certification program is robust and ready to be implemented nationally. An Advisory Committee (Committee) will represent ALA divisions, roundtables, committees, and WCSL and provide guidance to the project directors. The Committee members (see attached list) represent interested stakeholder groups. The Committee will meet three times a year to: 1) review and provide guidance on the project's progress; 2) determine the core competencies and assessment method; 3) review the certification program's policies and procedures; and 4) suggest changes based on the results of the field tests.

Year One: The Committee will review the WCSL competencies and draft competencies for the LSSCP. The project directors will create a project website, which the project assistant will update continuously with information about project progress, drafts of important documents, and information about the field tests. The needs of project participants will drive the website content.

Year Two: The Committee will draft policies and procedures for the LSSCP. Project directors will manage this process and development of the field tests and the assessment portion of the project.

Year Three: Project directors will field test the competencies, policies, and procedures with five entities: a state library, a state library association, a community college, an ALA division, and a multi-type cooperative. These sites offer diverse environments in which to test the model.

The ALA Council, ALA's governing body, must approve the certification program. The project will adhere to all ALA procedures and deadlines for this approval. Due to the liaison work provided by Committee members and project directors, it is anticipated that ALA's divisions, committees, and roundtables will support the program. Project directors will also engage in a dialogue with Council members throughout the project, through regular updates and answering Council questions as they occur. With the support of ALA's President, wide dissemination of project activities and timely project information to Council, project directors anticipate that Council will approve the certification program at the end of Year Three. If Council does not approve the certification program the first year, ALA-APA will address all the concerns raised by Council and seek approval the following year, after the grant period. ALA is committed to continuing activities for library support staff

¹² Denise Davis and Tracie Hall, *Diversity Counts* (Chicago, IL: American Library Association, 2006), <http://www.ala.org/diversitycounts> (accessed December 11, 2006).

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into the future. The project will nevertheless result in a fully developed, tested set of competencies and a certification program's policies and procedures. State libraries, library associations, LTA programs, or library cooperatives may adopt these program components to improve or modify local, state, or regional programs.

Objective One: Develop a set of national core competencies for library support staff that are applicable in academic and public libraries.

Several states and the WCSL have developed competencies for LSS. None seem to apply to both public and academic LSS. Although ALA adopted and published *Criteria for Programs to Prepare Library Technical Assistants*, accepted by many LTA programs, this does not include a set of target competencies.

As previously mentioned, WCSL has developed and validated a set of competencies for "library practitioners," who are library directors practicing without an MLS. WCSL defines a core competency as a knowledge or skill that every library practitioner should have and/or be able to do. During the project's first year, the Committee will review WCSL and other state's competencies and modify them for use with LSS in public and academic libraries.

Project directors will validate the set of competencies using a process similar but more expansive than the one used by WCSL. Reviewers will include the Committee, state library staff, managers in public and academic libraries of all sizes, and library support staff. Reviewers will rate the competencies on a five-point scale: 5) essential, 4) desirable, 3) useful, 2) minimally useful, 1) unimportant, plus a "no opinion" option. Competencies will be deemed valued if reviewers rate the competency a (3) useful, or higher. Any competencies rated below a three, by responders from one type of library or overall, will be eliminated or revised. Project directors will ask the reviewers to consider and rank the competencies within each category. This final ranking will result in a final set of competencies.

Project directors will distribute the final set of competencies widely to state libraries, library associations, ALA divisions, LTA programs, library cooperatives, and individual libraries (See Dissemination Section).

Results of Objective One: Set of validated core competencies of enduring value for library support staff in public and academic libraries.

Objective Two: Develop and implement certification program policies and procedures.

Developing competencies is only the first step to establishing a certification program. Both the WCSL and the ALA-APA certification programs have developed an implementation model for a certification program to meet the needs of their special audiences. The Committee will use these models as a starting point for their discussion and will consider the following:

- Eligibility criteria and application process;
- Core and elective competency requirements;
- Number of courses required and number of hours/credits required;
- Cost to participate for library support staff and course providers;
- Provider requirements (including relation of curriculum to competencies);
- Solicitation of providers and approval process;
- Acceptable course delivery options (as broad as possible);
- Time requirements for completion of work;
- Reciprocity among states and/or adoption of national program;
- A marketing plan to articulate the benefits of participating in the certification program.

Project directors will ask states with certification programs to review the implementation model and to provide comments. These states have the knowledge, based on their experience, to provide valuable feedback. We also

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foresee that some states may adopt the ALA certification program as fulfilling state requirements and this review will give these states information needed to start planning to do so.

Result of Objective Two: A robust certification process is ready to be field-tested (See Objective Four).

Objective Three: Provide alternative options for assessment of current knowledge, experience and new learning.

Assessment will be a major component of this project. Three major issues are involved. First, ALA and WCSL are committed to designing a certification program that does not rely on the number of courses taken as evidence of the applicant's mastery of the competencies. During the WCSL Library Practitioner's project, many stakeholders asked for an assessment program. Unfortunately, the project had neither the funds nor the time to develop an assessment component.

Second, ALA and WCSL will investigate the issue of recognizing the knowledge of experienced applicants. This assessment is necessary because job longevity is not a proxy for competency. Conversely, longevity may bring competency. Only a fair assessment can determine this.

Third, ALA and WCSL want to avoid developing a test-based assessment method. Project directors will investigate what other methods are appropriate to assess knowledge.

Project directors will use the following principles to select assessment method. It will be 1) tied to the competencies; 2) include a method to assess current knowledge and experience; 3) practical, cost-effective, and accessible in its implementation; 4) applicable across geographic and library type; and 5) inclusive of evidence of understanding and performance.

In Year Two, project directors will work with a consultant, an expert in psychometrics or education assessment, who will provide advice and assist in developing a valid and reliable assessment. Project staff, the Committee, WCSL, and ALA will decide the final assessment strategy.

Result of Objective Three: Methods of assessment developed and ready for field-testing.

Objective Four: Establish a certification program at ALA and thoroughly test the model at five demonstration sites.

ALA will administer the LSSCP. This plan has several advantages: 1) ALA has the structure in place to establish a national program; 2) ALA has the expertise through its divisions, round tables, members, and staff to sustain the program and continue development of the program; 3) ALA is a national organization with a positive reputation among librarians and administrators; and 4) ALA supports the largest national library support staff group, LSSIRT, a ready audience to be the first participants in the LSSCP.

The LSSCP cannot be successful without the support of library organizations that train LSS and that will promote the certification program to their constituents. These organizations include state libraries; state library associations; regional cooperatives (intrastate and multi-state); library schools; LTA programs; individual libraries; library consultants; and ALA divisions and round tables. To be successful, the project must prove that these organizations can easily participate in the national certification program.

To test the robustness of the certification program, five different types of library organizations will be field test sites. These sites will use the competencies and implementation model with LSS in their service areas. The demonstration sites are the Arizona State Library and Archives for Western Council; the North Suburban Library System, Wheeling, Illinois; the Highline Community College, Des Moines, Washington; the Texas Library Association; and an ALA Division to be selected.

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During the demonstration period, these library organizations will be expected, as appropriate, to: 1) market the program to LSS in their service area; 2) recruit applicants; 3) form and support cohort groups; 4) assist participants in meeting program requirements; 5) help identify education providers and potentially be providers themselves; 6) assist LSS participants in compiling paperwork; and (7) evaluate and provide feedback regarding policies and procedures.

The project directors will monitor the experiences of different types of library organizations to identify best practices and the problems faced by types of library organization. This knowledge will assist ALA in implementing the program after the grant period is over.

Results of Objective Four:

- Program is tested and revised based on experience and results;
- At least 100 LSS participants will be enrolled across the five sites;
- 35 education providers approved
- 5 library organizations will be evaluated for effectiveness and efficiency in piloting LSSCP.

Evaluation Plan

The goal of this project is that users of academic and public libraries will have improved services because of a national certification program for library support staff provided by the ALA. Project outcomes are:

- ALA adopts and implements a certification program for library support staff;
- The program has validated competencies;
- The program has a set of effective, efficient, and practical procedures and processes that work in the field tests
- The program has a reliable assessment methodology.

Through a competitive Request for Proposal process, the project directors and Committee will select an experienced evaluator to assess the project. This person will be engaged in Year One to review the objectives and determine what data, observations, or experiences should be collected throughout the project to benefit the final evaluation. Because this project includes both process work (developing the competencies, assessments, and procedures) and outcome work, (determining if the demonstration sites show that the processes developed are viable), the evaluator must set evaluation goals at the beginning of the project to guide the project implementation. After this initial work in Year One, the project directors will discuss the project with the evaluator semi-annually to identify problems that may effect evaluation. The evaluator will complete the bulk of the evaluation work in the project's final six months. The evaluator will review all project documents, interview key informants, and assess the outcomes of the field tests.

Looking at the project in a different way, the most powerful outcome of the project is new/improved knowledge, skills, and abilities for the participants. A longer term outcome that is just as important, if not more so, is an improvement in the job condition of library support staff. In other words—are certification program students more competitive in job seeking, are they more likely to rise faster into positions of increasing responsibility, are they considered as leaders to a greater extent than colleagues who have not gone through the program? These are all very valid questions that can form the basis for outcome measures in the intermediate and longer term. Unfortunately, this three year project is too short to include this longer term evaluation. Fortunately, ALA is committed to evaluating, over time, not just the number of enrollees in the ALA Certification Program, but also how that enrollment and successful completion improves library service and the working lives of library support staff.

One possible approach is to look at changed attitudes and values (outcomes) of those individuals who participate in the demonstration phase of the project. The ALA LSSCP is going to offer an organized, sanctioned set of

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coursework based on professional learning objectives and content relevant to practice from a variety of providers that have all been accredited for the purposes of this program. Participants who are really motivated will have to actively choose to participate in the program leading to certification rather than choosing some ad hoc array of workshops, conferences, or whatever other continuing education (CE) options are available. By offering a program leading to certification, the project should also impact the attitudes and values of library support staff. The project directors recommend that ALA-APA include this approach in its post-project evaluation.

PROJECT RESOURCES: BUDGET, PERSONNEL, AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Budget

The major activities of this project are to analyze existing materials, to decide which elements of these existing documents and processes work best for a national program, and to communicate these decisions to stakeholder groups. Therefore, the majority of the project's budget will support personnel costs including project directors, a program assistant, and the Committee.

Costs to support meetings to analyze, discuss, and decide are a significant part of this budget request. To contain these costs, project directors plan to hold meetings during ALA Annual Conferences and Midwinter Meetings, and to use existing, low-cost meeting technologies in place of many face-to face meetings. In addition to personnel and meeting costs, the project will provide supplies and telecommunication services to the project directors and program assistant.

The project will provide funds for each test site to subsidize activities to support project activities. Project directors will approve the payment of the stipend after receiving and approving test plans from each site.

Another significant cost is the hiring of an educational assessment expert who will provide guidance to project staff and the Committee regarding developing and implementing a robust and valid assessment process. To keep costs low and to choose a consultant who can best perform this work, project directors will distribute a Request for Proposal widely to seek the most cost-effective and qualified expert.

In-kind contributions total \$546,198. Contributions include significant donations of time by Jenifer Grady, members of the Committee, ALA divisions, committees, and offices, staff members at the demonstration sites, and Western Council members. ALA's indirect charges are 25.3% as outlined in a previously negotiated agreement.

Personnel

Mary W. Ghikas, Certified Association Executive (CAE), will be the ALA Grant Administrator for LSSCP. In her position as ALA Senior Associate Director she has a broad directorate including eleven ALA divisions, each with its own executive director and elected board of directors, and with membership ranging from 1,000 to over 10,000; five ALA program offices, covering accreditation, diversity, intellectual freedom, literacy and recruitment; conference services; information technology and telecommunications; and ALA-APA. Before coming to ALA in 1995, she held senior positions in public, nonprofit and private sector organizations. She is a graduate of UCLA, with an undergraduate degree in history and a graduate degree in library and information studies. Ms. Ghikas is uniquely positioned to bring together various interests of ALA Divisions and other units to make this project successful.

Karen Strege will share project director responsibilities with Nancy Bolt. Dr. Strege has a Master's Degree in Library Science from the University of Washington and a PhD in Education Leadership from Gonzaga University. Dr. Strege has many years of experience in a variety of professional positions, was the Montana State Librarian from 1996 to 2004, and currently is the Project Director for the WCSL's project "Continuum of Library Education." Dr. Strege's responsibilities will include completing all required project reports. Based on her experience in survey design and analysis, Dr. Strege will be responsible for designing, implementing, and

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analyzing the feedback regarding certification requirements and processes. Dr. Strege will work with two of the field test sites. She will be the key liaison with the Western Council of State Librarians.

Ms. Nancy Bolt holds a Master's Degree in Library Science from the University of Missouri and has many years of experience in library administration, most recently as the Director of the Colorado State Library from 1987 to 2005, and now as a private consultant. Ms. Bolt is currently evaluating the Minnesota Voluntary Certification Program for the Minnesota State Library. ALA has employed her to investigate the feasibility of the LSS Certification Program. Ms. Bolt will write and manage the Request for Information proposal to secure the services of an assessment expert. She will also act as project liaison with the hired expert. Ms. Bolt will act as liaison between ALA's divisions and the project and will oversee the program's approval process. Ms. Bolt will work with three of the field test sites. She will also be the key liaison with the Chief Officers of State Librarians (COSLA).

Together, Dr. Strege and Ms. Bolt will coordinate all aspects of the project; will collaborate on meeting agendas, ensure that all work melds together into one integrated program, and that all partners agree on common outcomes as the project progresses.

Ms. Jenifer Grady, the Director of the ALA-APA, will manage the project's program assistant and will serve as Chief Liaison with ALA's departments and leaders. Ms. Grady has a Master of Science in Library Science from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a Master's in Business Administration from Case Western Reserve University. Ms. Grady currently administers the Certified Public Library Administrator Program and serves as staff liaison to certification committees.

The program assistant (PA) will provide two critical areas of support to the project. The first is web maintenance. Working with ALA's Information Technology (IT) staff, the PA will maintain current and accurate information on the Website. The PA will also provide clerical assistance to Ms. Grady, Dr. Strege, and Ms. Bolt, including drafting press releases, making meeting arrangements, transcribing meeting notes, and other communications.

The following ALA staff will provide project support: Karen Muller, ALA Librarian, and her staff will perform needed research and deliver needed research documents. Sherri Vanyek, Director of the ALA Technology Office, and the staff of Production Services will provide web development staff to ALA-APA to develop the project's website and provide general technical support to the Program Assistant. The technology department will also provide project web hosting. Denise Davis, Director, Office for Research and Statistics will provide assistance with survey design and analysis. The Finance Office will provide accounting and report services. The Communications and Member Relations Department and Marketing staff will help identify marketing strategies for certification program implementation.

In addition, ALA Divisions, Round Tables, Committees and Offices (particularly the Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment) will support the project through the appointment of members to the Committee.

Management Plan

Both project directors have many years of experience with federal and state program planning, execution, and evaluation. Both are familiar with proper financial management of federal grant funds. These seasoned project directors will have overall responsibility for the project and will coordinate project activities with the Advisory Committee. The Committee will provide program direction and help resolve problems related to program operation. The directors will work closely with Jenifer Grady and the PA.

Dr. Strege and Ms. Bolt will provide bi-monthly progress reports to ALA Senior Associate Executive Director, Mary Ghikas, who will keep ALA's Executive Board informed about the project. Dr. Strege will meet with

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Western Council bi-annually to report upon project process. Ms. Bolt will also make regular reports to ALA governing bodies to support the process of approval by ALA.

DISSEMINATION

The project directors will be responsible for coordinating dissemination of project information. The project directors will work with ALA's Public Information Office to distribute information at milestone events to library support staff groups and to publications; relevant wikis and blogs; and other library media outlets. The project's website will be expertly designed so that users can easily find information on all project activities, past, present, and planned. The site will also feature FAQs and a blog, where project directors can present information and answer questions.

Because of the intense interest in this project, project directors will also insure that state libraries, state library associations, and regional networks are notified of the project's developments and milestones. Project directors will disseminate information on project activities after each Committee meeting.

Directors will encourage these organizations to highlight the projects through their regular communication devices. Directors will also reach out to bloggers in the library field to insure the widest possible dissemination of the project information.

In addition to printed updates, project directors intend to submit program proposals and present updates at various conferences including ALA Annual Conference, the PLA and the ACRL upcoming conferences and state library association conferences.

SUSTAINABILITY

ALA is committed to integrating the LSS Certification Program into the ALA-APA structure. Monitoring this project will be done by the ALA-APA Certification Program Committee and Support Staff Certification Review Committee which will be appointed to oversee this program in the future. This will happen beyond the period of this grant and requires no federal funding. ALA will also devote a full time equivalent employee to its continuation after the project's end. ALA will continue to support the program by providing the assistance of its Divisions, Roundtables, Committees and Departments, such as research and information technology, listed in the cost sharing details of this application.