



Library Support Staff Certification Program
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Library Support Staff Certification Program A Briefing for Discussion

The LSSCP Advisory Committee welcomes your comments on the Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP). Send your comments to Jamie Bragg (jbragg@ala-apa.org) or to Jamie at ALA Headquarters, 50 East Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. There will be an Open Forum on LSSCP at the ALA Midwinter meeting in Denver, CO, on Saturday, January 24 from 10:30am till noon at the Colorado Convention Center, Room 702. Comments will be accepted by mail or email until January 31, 2009, when revisions based on the comments will be made. All documents relating to LSSCP, are available at www.ala-apa.org/lsscp, including expanded versions of these topics. Those unable to attend the Open Forum at the Midwinter meeting may comment via blog postings at www.lsscp.blogspot.com, beginning December 19.

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Background of the Program

The Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded a *Laura Bush - Librarians for the 21st Century* grant to the American Library Association (ALA) and the Western Council of State Libraries to support the “Library Support Staff Certification Program” (LSSCP) project. This project is developing a competency-based certification program for the approximately 160,150 library workers in positions not requiring a Master’s Degree in Library Science. The primary target audience is public and academic library support staff. The project began in July 2007 with the hiring of Karen Strege and Nancy Bolt as Project Directors. An Advisory Committee was formed with representatives from ALA divisions, round tables, committees and the Western Council of State Libraries.

The proposal grew out of many years of studies conducted by ALA and state organizations calling for a certification program for library support staff (LSS). (See <http://www.ala-apa.org/lsscp/LSSCPNarrative.pdf> for the complete grant narrative and for citations to the relevant studies.) One of the more relevant studies occurred in 2005 when the ALA Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment (HRDR) sent a survey about professional development and certification to members of the Library Support Staff Interest Round Table (LSSIRT). Over 3,300 responded to the survey, and 86% of the respondents thought that a certification program would be beneficial; 76% said that nationally recognized professional standards were important; and 66% supported a national certification program to help them provide better service and grow in their understanding of librarianship.

Another stimulus for the current project was the 2003 ALA Congress on Professional Education III (COPE III). The Congress recommended that *“ALA, in cooperation with Library Support Staff Interest Round Table and other appropriate stakeholders, should study the feasibility of developing a voluntary national support staff certification program administered by the ALA-APA.”*

The following is the revised timetable for the LSSCP:

June 07-June 08	Develop competencies for LSS Seek approval of the competencies from participating ALA divisions, round tables and committees
June 08-June 09	Develop an assessment method Develop policies and procedures
June 09	Seek official approval for LSSCP
Aug 09 – Dec 09	Pilot test LSSCP
January 1, 2010	Begin accepting applications for participation

The definitions used in the program are included in Appendix A.

The Certification and Program Approval Process

The first ALA-APA sponsored certification offered was the Certified Public Library Administrators Program (CPLA). To prepare for that program and others, ALA developed a Certification Manual to govern the establishment of future certification programs. The manual outlines the following basic requirements:

- The program be sponsored and approved by one or more ALA divisions
- The program be approved by the ALA-APA Certification Program Committee
- The program be presented for discussion to the ALA Council
- The program be approved by the ALA Executive Board.

Once approved, the program will be managed by ALA-APA. The ALA-APA Board of Directors will name a Certification Review Committee to govern the program

Competencies

From the beginning, LSSCP has been conceived as a competency-based program.

The first task undertaken by the Project staff and the Advisory Committee (AC) was to develop competencies upon which the LSSCP could be based. In general, staff and the AC used the following criteria to develop the competency sets:

- Individual competencies should be organized in competency sets which represent major functions for support staff in a public and academic library
- Taken together, the competency sets contain the broad and basic skills and knowledge necessary for support staff work in a public or academic library
- To receive certification, LSS should demonstrate achievement in multiple competencies so that they have a broad understanding of library work
- This basic approach begins the certification program and the AC expects that additional competencies may be developed at a later time
- Some competency sets are so important they should be required, while other competency sets can be elective based on the interest of the candidate.

By spring 2007, the AC completed a draft of the competency sets and sent the draft to 36,000 ALA members and other interested parties. Respondents were encouraged to rate the competencies within eleven competency sets and to send comments. The survey received approximately 3,000 responses with approximately equal representation from academic and public librarians and LSS. Following the survey, the AC and project staff reviewed the comments and survey results, revised individual competencies and reduced the competency sets to nine. At its June 2008 meeting, the AC recommended that all candidates must demonstrate achievement of three of the competency sets and must demonstrate achievements of three more sets from the remaining six electives.

The three required competency sets:

1. Communication and Teamwork
2. Foundations of Library Service
3. Technology

The six elective competency sets, from which three need be chosen:

1. Access Services
2. Adult Reader's Advisory Services
3. Reference and Adult Services
4. Supervision and Management
5. Technical Services
6. Youth Services

As of June 2008, RUSA, PLA, ALCTS, ASCLA and LAMA (now LLAMA) have approved the competencies. The Competency Sets are included in Appendix B.

Assessment

The AC recommends two forms of assessment for demonstrating that candidates have achieved competency sets. The first will be a process for course approval. LSSCP candidates who successfully complete an approved course will have met that competency set. The second assessment method will allow the candidate to demonstrate achievements via an electronic portfolio system. This method lets candidates receive credit for a competency set by demonstrating past learning from job experience and from new learning from a variety of sources. Volunteer librarian experts will evaluate portfolios. The AC hopes the ALA Divisions and relevant committees will recruit evaluators who have expertise in the competency sets and that library school faculty will volunteer to be evaluators.

ALA Divisions may choose to submit courses for course approval and assist their members with participating in the portfolio process through workshops or other assistance. For a more detailed explanation of the assessment process, see Appendix C.

Policies and procedures

LSSCP will be supported by policies and procedures that will govern the implementation and operation of the program. These policies and procedures cover eligibility, application, registration, fees and other aspects of program implementation. For a more detailed explanation of policies and procedures, see Appendix D.

Pilot testing

The AC strongly believes that LSSCP should be pilot tested prior to full implementation. The tests are scheduled to begin in August 2009. The test sites are five different types of library organizations that are most likely to sponsor courses or assist LSSCP candidates in the portfolio process. The five organizations are the Arizona State Library, the Texas Library Association, Highline Community College in Washington State, ALCTS and a regional library cooperative (yet to be selected).

The Relationship between LSSCP and Library Technical Assistant Programs

The LSSCP will not supplant the approximately 50 Library Technical Assistant (LTA) programs in community colleges which lead to certificates or associate degrees. The LSSCP will not offer courses but will instead identify education providers. LTA programs are important education providers for LSS. The AC hopes that LTA programs will apply for approval of courses that address a competency set. LTA programs could also assist their students and graduates to prepare and submit portfolios.

Business Plan

A full business plan to support LSSCP has been developed. The plan covers the following: 1) governance and management; 2) operational requirements; 3) marketing; 4) projected participation over the first three years; and 5) a financial plan.

In summary, the LSSCP will be managed by ALA-APA with a projected staffing of 1.5 FTE. Based on a survey of potential applicants, the plan estimates that 300 LSS will apply to be candidates in each of the first three years. At an estimated fee of \$350 per candidate (to cover the cost of enrollment and subscription to an online portfolio program), the plan projects that by the end of the third year the project will be close to paying all of its costs. For a more detailed look at the business plan, see Appendix E.

The Advisory Committee (AC)

This AC has representatives from the following:

- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)
- Association of Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS)
- Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA)
- Public Library Association (PLA)
- Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)
- Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA)
- Committee on Education (COE)
- Library Support Staff Interest Round Table (LSSIRT)
- Western Council of State Libraries (WCSL)

The AC meets three times a year.: An electronic discussion group facilitates frequent online communication. The project staff develops project ideas and documents and shares them with the Advisory Committee for review and consensus. The members of the Advisory Committee are also expected to be the liaison to the ALA unit they represent.

Appendix A

Library Support Staff Certification Program

Definitions

Approved course

A course that has been submitted to the LSSCP, using a standard form, through the Course Approval Process, and approved as fulfilling criteria for teaching a competency set. The process includes a description of the course content, the instructors, the method of instruction and method to assess learning. When a course is approved, an LSSCP candidate who completes the courses successfully need only submit proof of completion and will not have to submit a portfolio on that competency set. An approved course must teach an entire competency set.

A course may be a workshop or institute or other educational offering; be offered over several weeks or in a more condensed period; be online or in person or a combination of both; and be synchronous or asynchronous.

Candidate Achievement Record (CAR)

The candidate's online record that includes general contact information; all submissions and portfolios developed to meet competency sets; evidence of courses taken from approved providers; and any other information the candidate wishes to include or which is requested by either the LSSCP Certification Review Committee (CRC) or the portfolio evaluators.

Competencies

Skills and knowledge necessary for LSS job performance. LSSCP competencies are grouped into nine Competency Sets, based on typical public and academic library responsibilities. They are also sometimes referred to as competency areas.

Competency Set

A group of related competencies developed to standardize expectations for academic and public Library Support Staff, give education providers guidance for developing courses, or training curriculums and help employers articulate job requirements.

Competency Set Achievement

An LSSCP candidate achieves a competency set when the candidate meets all the requirements for that competency set. The candidate proves achievement by either submitting evidence of successful course completion from an approved provider or by receiving a positive assessment for a competency set from portfolio evaluators.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicants must satisfy the following requirements to be accepted into the LSSCP program: previous work experience in any type of library for a minimum of 1820 hours within the last five years; and a high-school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) credential. Educational qualifications from other countries will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

LSS

Library Support Staff are those who work in a library and do not have a Master's Degree in Library Science.

Portfolio

An integrated set of documents organized by competency set which include: 1) reflective narratives identifying and articulating the candidate's knowledge and skills and 2) documents providing evidence of the candidates' learning and if the portfolio is based on learning gained through work and/or other experience, evidence substantiating the experience through which the learning was achieved. The portfolio is online, hosted on a website that accepts electronic documents, e.g., those created, modified or scanned to be read on a computer screen or printed

from a computer. Candidates will upload, post and/or submit documents to their secure and personalized portfolio website.

Portfolio Evaluators

Library school educators and librarians with experience in the area of a competency set based on application to and selection by LSSCP Certification Review Committee. Portfolio evaluators must complete the portfolio assessment training.

Portfolio Evaluation Guidelines

Criteria that are used to evaluate the information and documentation submitted in a portfolio. The evaluation guidelines are available to the candidates and used by the portfolio evaluators.

Appendix B Competencies

Required Competencies:

COMMUNICATION AND TEAM WORK COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)

Library Support Staff need to communicate effectively with library users, library staff and others in a variety of situations to offer high-quality customer service. Library Support Staff are also required to make decisions that impact library services and serve as valued members of work teams. This set is divided into two parts: communication and team work; and decision-making.

COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES

Library Support Staff will know:

1. Basic concepts of interpersonal relations, customer service and communication.
2. The importance of upholding policies and decisions and when to make exceptions.
3. Tools for resolving conflict.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

4. Treat others with respect, fairness and consistency.
5. Seek, give and accept constructive feedback from coworkers, supervisors and users.
6. Resolve conflict in a positive and productive manner and judge when situations should be referred to a supervisor.
7. Select the most appropriate and effective medium and techniques for communicating.
8. Consider the language, communication styles and needs of diverse users when responding to or initiating communication.
9. Write clearly, logically and concisely.
10. Listen effectively and transmit information accurately and understandably.
11. Identify the critical issues to be communicated in complex situations.
12. Use appropriate strategies to deliver difficult or sensitive information.
13. Use approachable and welcoming behavior with all users.
14. Anticipate and maintain awareness of users' needs and wants in order to provide or improve services.

TEAM WORK AND DECISION-MAKING

Library Support Staff will know:

15. Basic concepts of team work.
16. Basic concepts of effective decision-making.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

17. Participate effectively on teams and in groups and commit to meeting agreed-upon goals and objectives.
18. Promote communication and respect among team members.
19. Provide timely, accurate and candid information to supervisors and peers and identify to whom critical issues should be communicated.
20. Gather the best available information to support decisions.
21. Participate with others in collegial decision-making and problem solving and support the decisions of the team.
22. Communicate information or data in an understandable format.

FOUNDATION COMPETENCIES (revised July 21, 2008)

These competencies are fundamental to understanding the mission and roles of libraries. These competencies cover the ethics, values and governance of libraries and the basic knowledge needed for all positions in a library.

Library Support Staff will know:

1. The mission and roles of a library in its community and the mission of libraries in general.
2. The ethics and values of the profession, including an understanding of the Library Bill of Rights, the ALA Code of Ethics, freedom of information, confidentiality of library records and privacy issues.
3. The roles of Library Support Staff and other staff in libraries.
4. The responsibilities of and the relationships among library departments or functional areas.
5. Basic principles of:
 - reference and information services;
 - circulation, including interlibrary loan and collection maintenance;
 - current cataloging and classification systems
 - acquisitions and collection development.
6. How libraries are governed and funded and the place of libraries within organizations or government structures.
7. The value of cooperating with other libraries to enhance services.
8. The value of participating in professional development opportunities, including certification, continuing education, staff development and professional associations.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

9. Practice quality customer service.
10. Communicate and promote the library's values and services to staff, volunteers, users and the community.
11. Recognize and respond to diversity in user needs and preferences for resources and services.

TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)

These competencies address the skills and knowledge about technology necessary for library work. This competency set also addresses the role of providing access to and educating the user in the use of technologies and equipment relevant to information seeking, access and use.

Library Support Staff will know:

1. General trends and developments of appropriate technology in all library functions and services whether offered in the library or through remote access.
2. Technology's role in creating, retrieving and delivering library resources, function and services.
3. The role and responsibility of libraries for introducing relevant applications of technology to the public, including assistive technology.
4. Basic computer operations needed to access library applications software and productivity tools.
5. Basic networking technologies and protocols.
6. Basic data security principles and best practices to ensure the integrity of data and the confidentiality of user activities
7. Concepts and issues concerning the appropriate use of technology by different user groups.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

8. Adapt to changes in technology.
9. Transfer information gained from training into the work place.
10. Assist and train users to operate public equipment, connect to the internet, utilize library software applications and access library services from remote locations.
11. Use information discovery tools including the library's catalog, core library databases and internet search engines.

12. Perform basic troubleshooting of technical problems and resolve or appropriately refer those problems.
13. Access and use basic assistive technologies, where appropriate, to ensure that all users have equitable access to technology.

Elective Competencies:

ACCESS SERVICES COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)

Access Services include on-site use and the routine circulation of resources in all formats, special circulation of course-reserve or other restricted-use materials, on-site and remote reciprocal circulation with users of partner libraries, interlibrary loan and document delivery.

Library Support Staff will know:

1. Classification and organization schemes for collections.
2. Processes for circulating library materials.
3. Basic characteristics of systems supporting circulation and interlibrary loan.
4. Copyright issues pertaining to access functions such as reserves, document delivery and interlibrary loan.
5. Principles, policies and procedures regarding user privacy in library services.
6. Policies and procedures for resource sharing among libraries.
7. Principles of security for people, equipment and collections

Library Support Staff will be able to:

8. Propose and explain library policies and procedures regarding access services.
9. Provide quality customer service to library users.
10. Manage people with diverse needs, diverse situations and emergencies.
11. Perform applicable financial transactions and record keeping.
12. Maintain collections by shelving, shifting and shelf reading.
13. Assist with identifying materials for preservation and/or replacement.
14. Manage appropriate technologies and equipment for resource sharing, reserves and user services.
15. Troubleshoot and solve problems related to circulation and resource sharing processes.
16. Assist with collecting and reporting data on collections and services.

ADULT READER'S ADVISOR COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)

In recent years, Reader's Advisory services have expanded from assisting library users with identifying books to read to assisting users with identifying materials for viewing and listening. These services consist of recommending titles of potential interest to the user to match the user's interests and experience as well as promoting the collection.

Library Support Staff will know:

1. The library's collection and where to locate materials by type and genre.
2. A general familiarity with popular and classic fiction, including a knowledge of authors, various fiction genres and popular, current non-fiction.
3. A general familiarity with popular and classical music, including a general knowledge of performers and composers.
4. A general familiarity with variety of films, including a general knowledge of directors and actors in different film and media genres.
5. Online and print readers' advisory tools and reviewing sources.
6. Formats appropriate for persons with disabilities affecting vision, hearing or understanding.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

7. Use online and print readers' advisory tools and reviewing sources.

8. Briefly and succinctly, describe the plot of a book, film or other media and its appeal.
9. Determine users' interests and make connections between their interests and similar works.
10. Make recommendations without judgment regarding reading, listening or viewing preferences.
11. Select materials from the library collections in response to users' inquiries.
12. Assist users with finding specific titles in their preferred format.
13. Assist in developing, promoting and implementing programs based on the library collections, such as book discussions, summer reading programs, film and media programs.
14. Assist in compiling resource lists and displays of books, recordings, films and media by genre, historical period, subject or author, composer or director.
15. Suggest additions to the collection based on trends in materials requested and borrowed.

REFERENCE AND INFORMATION SERVICES COMPETENCIES (revised June 19, 2008)

These services support library users as they seek access to information in all formats, wherever these resources are located. These competencies require an understanding of basic information resources and of the user's information seeking behavior and expectations.

Library Support Staff will know:

1. The general scope of the library's collections including areas of strength and specialized collections.
2. Legal issues involved in reference services, including user privacy, confidentiality and copyright.
3. Basic reference, information and community resources.
4. Classification and organization schemes for collections.
5. Basic search methods, display options and terminology of the library's catalog, website and other information access tools

Library Support Staff will be able to:

6. Conduct effective reference interviews, helping users define their information needs.
7. Judge when referrals are necessary and use appropriate referral procedures.
8. Instruct users in basic research procedures, including use of the library's catalog, general database and web searching and locating materials in the library.
9. Use basic searching skills to find information in print, non-print and digital resources.
10. Use locally developed tools such as subject guides, FAQs and other resources that provide guidance to answer information requests.
11. Help users select the most appropriate information resource to meet their needs and evaluate the quality, currency and authority of information retrieved.
12. Identify and locate information in all formats and assist users in retrieving materials, including those not held locally.
13. Interpret bibliographic record and citation formats.

SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)

Library Support Staff often hold positions that involve supervision and management. These staff members may also need to demonstrate the competencies specific to a department in which they work.

SUPERVISION COMPETENCIES

Library Support Staff will know:

1. Basic regulations and laws that govern employment; library policies and procedures; and how policies are influenced by local, state and federal laws and regulations.
2. Principles of staff management, supervision and discipline.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

3. Participate in recruiting, hiring, training, evaluating and promoting library staff.
4. Set clear performance expectations linked to the library's strategies and priorities
5. Demonstrate leadership in a team environment.
6. Plan, implement and encourage participation in staff development activities.

MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

Library Support Staff will know:

7. The value of written, approved policies and the difference between policies and procedures.
8. The basic purposes and concepts of budgeting, grant writing and fundraising.
9. The value of planning library services based on community demographics and needs and evaluating these services.
10. Principles and the value of cooperation and collaborating with other libraries, agencies and organizations.
11. Principles of marketing the library and its services.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

12. Develop realistic goals and measurable objectives after careful consideration of benefits, risks and impact on library current and future needs.
13. Develop, implement and evaluate recommendations for new services and programs based on analysis and interpretation of data about various aspects of library operations.
14. Review existing and develop new policies and procedures.
15. Develop and implement a marketing plan for the library and evaluate its effectiveness.
16. Build positive relationships between staff and users, applying concepts of user-oriented customer service.
17. Demonstrate the ability and willingness to uphold policies and decisions and know when exceptions are appropriate.
18. Use appropriate strategies to deliver difficult or sensitive information.
19. Identify community and user demographics and assist in planning library services on those demographics and needs.
20. Request, defend and follow a budget for library activities.
21. Conduct meetings effectively and efficiently.

TECHNICAL SERVICES COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)

These competencies include those necessary for Library Support Staff to perform work essential to the library's cataloging, acquisition and collection development functions. These competencies are divided into those three areas.

CATALOGING COMPETENCIES

Library Support Staff will know:

1. The functionality of integrated library systems.
2. Basic tools, both print and online, for cataloging.
3. The basics of MARC format, cataloging rules, subject headings, classification and organization schemes.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

4. Use bibliographic utilities.
5. Use the cataloging functions of integrated library systems.
6. Perform basic copy cataloging, including reviewing and editing cataloging records.

ACQUISITIONS AND PROCESSING COMPETENCIES

Library Support Staff will know:

1. The functionality of integrated library systems.

2. Basic principles of ordering, receiving and claiming for text and electronic resources.
3. Basic principles for acquisition and management of special materials, such as serials, periodicals, electronic media and other formats.
4. Basic principles of processing all formats, including specialized collections.
5. Basic organization of the publishing industry and familiarity with vendors of materials, supplies, equipment and services.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

6. Apply effective procedures for verifying, ordering and receiving orders; resolving problems; and accounting for expenditures.
7. Apply appropriate methods and techniques for accurate physical preparation of materials.
8. Assist with acquisition budget tracking and reporting.
9. Use standard sources to assist with collection development and procurement.

COLLECTION MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

Library Support Staff will know:

1. The functionality of the integrated library system.
2. The general purpose of collection development and management in libraries as well as the value of consortial partnerships.
3. General selection and deselection criteria.
4. The policies for accepting gifts of library materials.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

5. Use standard methods for material rebinding, storage and preservation.
6. Assist with decisions regarding weeding, material retention and replacement.
7. Evaluate options for repairing and/or replacing worn or damaged materials.
8. Perform basic repair of materials of various formats.
9. Maintain the collection using standard preservation techniques.

YOUTH SERVICES COMPETENCIES (revised June 19, 2008)

These competencies are for support staff working in a public library in service to youth, from birth through age seventeen. Services to youth include collection development, programming, providing Readers Advisory and Reference services and teaching information literacy skills and related activities.

Library Support Staff will know:

1. A general understanding of the stages of childhood and adolescent development and factors contributing to the development of early literacy skills.
2. Resources for youth in different formats, including award-winners, classic titles and age-appropriate materials.
3. How to select appropriate materials for a particular youth, based on such factors as reading level, interest and level of maturity.
4. Appropriate internet sites, rules for safe navigation and use of online search tools and other technological applications for youth.
5. Legal and other issues affecting youth.

Library Support Staff will be able to:

6. Establish a welcoming atmosphere and actively encourage youth participation in library programs and in the use of resources.
7. Demonstrate written and oral communication skills for working with youth, their parents and other caregivers, other library staff and the personnel of agencies serving youth.
8. Assist with selecting appropriate materials for a youth collection.

9. Assist with planning, presenting and evaluating library programs that will attract youth.
10. Assist with advocating for and publicizing youth services.
11. Work cooperatively with personnel in schools and other community agencies serving youth.
12. Conduct effective reference and readers advisory interviews for youth and their parents and other caregivers and refer to a librarian when appropriate.
13. Assist with developing and marketing services for youth and their parents and other caregivers.
14. Instruct youth in the use of library materials, resources and equipment.
15. Manage youth problem behavior and emergency situations.
16. Follow policies and procedures related to challenged resources.

Appendix C

Recommendations on Assessment of Learning in the LSSCP

1. **National Standardized Testing**

Do not adopt national testing at this stage of the planning. The projected cost to develop national testing program is not included in the current grant. Investigate the total cost of national test development and implementation during this grant cycle and, if a decision is made to pursue national testing, include in a second grant application to IMLS.
2. **Methods of Assessment**

Two methods will be used for assessment: a portfolio submission process and a process for approving courses in competency sets.

 - A. **Portfolio**

Portfolios may include evidence of the following:

 - Prior learning gained through past work experience, in which case evidence must be submitted substantiating the experience through which the learning was achieved.
 - New learning acquired through taking courses, self-directed study, special projects or new on-the-job training and experience.
 - A combination of prior learning and new learning.

All competency areas may be achieved through the portfolio method.
 - B. **Approved Courses**

Providers who offer courses and other educational opportunities in specific competency sets may apply to have a course or courses reviewed and designated as approved courses for specific competency sets. The approval process will be rigorous, requiring a clear indication of the curriculum, instructor qualifications and the assessment method used to evaluate the learning of the LSSCP candidates. Approval will be for a specific course that meets a complete competency set. The approved courses and their providers will be listed on the LSSCP website. Course providers may include library schools, Library Technical Assistant programs, state libraries, state library associations, regional library cooperatives, ALA Divisions, private organizations that provide continuing educational opportunities or individual consultants.

When a candidate successfully completes an approved course, official evidence of that successful completion will be required, to be submitted by the candidate on an official form provided by LSSCP.
3. **The Candidate Achievement Record (CAR)**

The Candidate Achievement Record will be a comprehensive electronic record of the candidate's application, work experience and achievement of the LSSCP competency sets. An online commercial electronic portfolio company will provide the software and structure for the LSSCP Achievement Record. Subscription costs for this service will be included in the application fee to become an LSSCP candidate.

Candidates can allow potential employers, graduate schools or anyone else they choose to access the LSSCP Achievement Record to demonstrate their competence and performance. Each candidate will control access to his/her own Achievement Record.
4. **Portfolio Review**

Reviewers selected and trained by the LSSCP Certification Review Committee (CRC) will review portfolios for evidence of achievement of a specific competency set when a candidate requests a review. Training will be provided on a regular basis at annual or midwinter conferences as needed for portfolio evaluators.

An online portfolio manual will be available for both LSSCP candidates and portfolio reviewers. The manual will include all of the information necessary to submit and review portfolios, including a description of the content expected in a portfolio and evaluation guidelines for assessing portfolios.

Two reviewers will evaluate each portfolio. To increase validity, reliability and fairness, the two reviewers would be unknown to each other, would not have access to the other reviewer's assessment until after both assessments are done and would not know the name of the LCCSP candidate. The review could have one of several outcomes:

- A. Both reviewers agree that the candidate has successfully achieved the competency set and the candidate's application is complete for that specific area.
- B. Both reviewers agree that the candidate does not meet the competencies in the competency set. Via the CRC chair or ALA-APA staff, the reviewers may ask the candidate to revise portions of the portfolio and/or to submit additional material. They may also recommend that the candidate take an approved course in this competency set.
- C. If the reviewers' assessments are not in agreement, CRC will ask a third reviewer to assess the portfolio with either option "a" or "b" as the outcome.

5. Evaluation

Once a competency set is completed successfully, through either evaluation of a portfolio or through evidence of successful completion of an approved course, the evaluation is considered final and complete for that competency set.

6. Requirements for Completion of Competency Sets

LSSCP participants may submit their work for a specific competency set when they have completed the work. The CRC will review portfolios on a regular basis and candidates will indicate when they are ready to have a competency set reviewed. Individual competency sets will be assessed following their submission, and there will be no required order of submission. When the three required competency sets and the three elective areas have successfully been met, certification will be awarded.

7. Assessment Manual

A comprehensive Assessment Manual would be available online (for free) and in print (for a fee). The Assessment Manual will contain guidelines for the Achievement Record, for portfolios, for the use of approved providers and for the application process to become an approved provider.

Appendix D Policies and Procedures

Candidate Eligibility Requirements

To participate in the LSSCP, library support staff applicants must have a total of 1,820 hours of library experience, paid or unpaid, within the last five years in any type of library. Applicants must have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Applications from LSS whose education is outside the US will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Length of Program

The Advisory Committee recommends that LSSCP candidates have a maximum of four years to complete the six competency sets.

Fees

The cost for enrolling in the LSSCP is tentatively set at \$350, paid upon application to be accepted as a candidate. This includes the cost of a five year subscription to an electronic achievement record system that will house portfolios and other documents. It does not include any costs associated with individual courses that the candidate might take.

Renewal

Certificate holders must renew their certificate every five years.

Appendix E Business Plan Summary

Governance and Management

LSSCP Certification Review Committee

According to ALA-APA policies, the ALA-APA Board of Directors appoints a standing Certification Review Committee (CRC) for each proposed certification program to exist for the life of that program. The purposes of a CRC are to oversee development and administration of a validated method of measuring competence, based on the subject standards for professional practice; and to establish an appeals process for the specific program. The CRC will report regularly to the ALA-APA Board of Directors and ALA-APA Council.

The LSSCP Certification Review Committee (LSSCP CRC) will consist of five members: two library support staff members, one each from a public and academic library; two librarians, one each from a public and academic library; and one library educator from a Library Technical Assistant program. The committee composition may require additional appointments of working groups depending on the assessment model and the effort required to review portfolios and providers.

LSSCP Management

The Director of the ALA-APA will oversee the day-to-day management of the LSSCP and make regular reports to the LSSCP CRC. A Program Officer will oversee the day-to-day operations of the program assisted by a part-time Program Assistant.

Operations Plan

The ALA-APA office is located in the ALA Headquarters at 50 East Huron in Chicago, Illinois. Existing hardware and software appear to be adequate for normal office operations. Licenses or subscriptions will be required for online portfolio management and certification management software. The program will require filing cabinets, stationery and promotional materials.

The program will require one full-time Program Officer (PO) and one half-time Program Assistant (PA). The PO's responsibilities will include:

- Provide reports to ALA-APA Director
- Staff liaison to the LSSCP CRC
- Communicate with candidates, providers and others
- Answer complex questions
- Train evaluators and oversee the portfolio assessment process
- Oversee the course approval process
- Promote the program
- Create content for the LSSCP website
- Make presentations and provide other publicity about the program
- Oversee the program financials
- Prepare annual budgets

The PA's duties will include:

- Track and monitor candidates and provider application, progress and renewal cycles
- Prepare correspondence to candidates, providers and others
- Answer basic program questions
- Monitor, maintain, and manage the website
- Perform simple budgetary tasks, such as reimbursements
- Provide clerical assistance
- Handle all logistics for meetings of CRC and evaluator training

Marketing Plan

Target Markets

The market consists of three groups -- library support staff, their supervisors (including library directors) and course providers. This plan considers its LSS audience to be a portion of the 121,000 workers who, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, hold the occupational title, Library Technicians. Approximately 86,087 of these Library Technicians work in public, college and academic libraries, including junior colleges. The Bureau projects an eight percent growth rate in this job classification, adding another 6,887 positions by 2016.

Library support staff hold a variety of titles and classifications. There is no standard way that libraries distinguish between and define clerks, assistants, associates, managers and library technicians. The program staff know that applicants will hold a myriad of titles and responsibilities.

The supervisors of LSS are the second target market of the LSSCP. Like LSS, this group holds a variety of titles and classifications. Indeed, some LSS are supervisors themselves. It is difficult to estimate precisely the number of LSS supervisors in public and academic libraries.

Course providers, the third audience, can include ALA divisions, state library associations, Library Technical Assistant programs, Library and Information Science programs, library consortia, library systems, university programs, state libraries, independent trainers, vendors and for-profit providers.

Target Market Research

In November 2008, program staff sent a survey to 1829 library support staff and received 565 responses. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain a reasonable prediction of LSS participants in the LSSCP and to identify incentives and barriers to their participation. Many of the LSS survey's findings drive the current business plan.

Program staff plan to survey potential course providers in early 2009. After staff analyzes this survey's results, staff will design a comprehensive marketing plan and modify the business plan as needed.

The program staff will solicit information from candidates to help plan subsequent marketing endeavors. For example, staff will ask brief questions about how the candidate learned about the program. Using these answers, program staff can develop tailored marketing. Furthermore, because LSS participation in the program is closely tied to employer support, marketing efforts will be focused on illustrating the value of the certification program to employers.

Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategies will include publicity in the professional library media targeted at national, regional and state publications, particularly those typically read by library support staff. Public appearances will also be scheduled at state library association meetings, particularly in those states with high library support staff participation. In addition, program staff will seek testimonials from participants and the endorsements of well-known LSS, including the Library Journal's Paraprofessional of the Year and the authors of books about and for LSS. These testimonials and endorsements will be featured on the website and collateral marketing material. Staff will use program milestones, such as the first and one-hundredth certification awards, to generate press releases highlighting the recipient and the program. Staff will seek industry funding for a kick-off reception at the 2010 Mid-Winter Meeting.

Projections of Participation

Candidates

The November 2008 survey of LSS showed that 73% or 441 of those who responded were somewhat or very interested in participating in the LSSCP. These respondents were most likely to have 11 or more years of experience in libraries.

The survey also asked those respondents who were somewhat or very interested in the LSSCP, when they would enroll in the LSSCP. Seventy percent or 291 of these respondents said that they would participate in the first year. Most of the rest of these respondents said that they did not know when they would participate.

The current recession is likely to influence the number of participants in the LSSCP. Survey results show that a significant number or 32% of those respondents who are somewhat or very interested in participation would do so without employer support, which is defined as financial assistance or release time to complete course work or the portfolio.

We estimate that 5,250 LSS are members of state associations or ALA (based on rough estimate of an average of 75 LSS members in each of 50 state associations or 3,750 and 1,500 LSS ALA members). If 74% of all LSS in this group are very or somewhat interested in the LSSCP, we can reasonably estimate that 3,885 LSS are interested in the LSSCP.

Based on the survey results and an analysis of current economic conditions, program staff project that 300 LSS will enroll in the program in each of first three years of the program. Subsequent enrollment will depend on economic conditions as well as on the success of marketing endeavors to demonstrate the certification's value to all the target market groups: LSS, LSS employers and course providers.

Course Providers

As stated above, the program will approve courses from a variety of providers. Currently, this plan estimates that 20 courses will be approved in each of the first three years of the program. Program staff will update this estimate after analyzing the results of the proposed survey scheduled for early 2009.

Financial Plan

The operation of the LSSCP will rely on the income from fees from candidates and course providers. The LSS survey asked respondents about the perception of a proposal \$350 fee, which includes the certification fees and subscription to the portfolio system. Forty percent of respondents thought that \$350 was "about right."

A financial spreadsheet outlining the project costs and income for the first three-years of the LSSCP is available for examination on the project's website. It is important to note that the cost of the portfolio software is estimated at \$75 per candidate. This financial projection shows a small loss to ALA-APA in each of the program years. Such losses might be mitigated by a decrease in non-fixed costs and the receipt of outside funding to support appropriate activities such as marketing (including website development) and evaluation.