

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FROM: Chief Officers of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE)

RE: Cooperative Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Evaluation

LSTA BACKGROUND

The Museum and Library Services Act of 2003 (Public Law 108-81), Subchapter II, the Library Services and Technology (LSTA), the only federal legislation that funds libraries exclusively, took effect on October 1, 2003. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) is the federal office responsible for administering the act. (See further <http://www.ims.gov/about/legislation.shtm>)

Through grants to States, the IMLS provides allotments to each state. SLAAs may use the appropriation to support statewide initiatives and services. They also may distribute the funds through sub grant competitions or cooperative agreements to public, academic, research, school, and special libraries in their state.

Each state prepared IMLS-approved five-year plan outlining its programs. These programs support the LSTA goals, which are to:

- expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages;
- develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international electronic networks;
- provide electronic and other linkages between and among all types of libraries;
- develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations;
- target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills; and
- target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families with incomes below the poverty line (Grants to State Library Administrative Agencies <http://www.ims.gov/programs/programs.shtm>)

In order to be eligible for LSTA funds, each state submitted a five-year strategic plan to the IMLS, describing how the funds would be expended in its state to meet the priorities of the law and fulfill the particular needs of the state. Once IMLS accepted each state's plan, states had two further responsibilities: 1) submit of an annual narrative report describing how the state met its five-year plan objectives and activities during the preceding federal fiscal year and 2) submit an overall evaluation of how it fulfilled the

goals of the plan during its five year course. The latter evaluation is to be submitted to the IMLS by March 31, 2007.

Information required by IMLS for the evaluation plan:

1. What will be evaluated? Please see the following web site:
<http://stateprograms.imls.gov/documents/Conf2005/HowWillWeDoIt.ppt>

- A. States are required to provide IMLS with an overall evaluation that describes their levels of success in achieving the goals in their 5-Year Plans. This component of the evaluation should address how the State Program stimulates excellence and promotes access to learning and information resources in all types of libraries for individual of all ages. (20 U.S.C. Section 9121).

States will review their goals and objectives and document major accomplishments. They will also describe lessons learned about what went well and what could be improved that will be addressed in terms of process and direction in the near 5-Year Plan. The overall results will be integrated into the next Plan as an updated needs assessment.

- B. States will also select specific goals, programs or groups of activities for more in-depth evaluation and reporting. In selecting areas for this reporting, states should consider the importance of the goal/activity for the state; the cumulative amount of funding expended under the goal/activity; a mix of grant and state-level projects where appropriate; and projects that the state wishes to highlight. Programs that reflect outcome planning and evaluation are particularly appropriate.

States should choose programs for reporting this in-depth evaluation that reflects both (1) providing services through technology including networks and linkages among and between libraries and (2) targeted services to people of diverse geographic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, individuals with disabilities and to people with limited functional literacy or information skills. (20 U.S.C. Section 9121)

The purpose of these in-depth evaluations is to further inform the library community and other stakeholders about accomplishments and/or lessons learned during this 5-year cycle of the LSTA State program and enrich the national report IMLS plans to prepare.

COSLINE STATES' PARTICIPATION IN COOPERATIVE EVALUATION

Six COSLINE states, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Maryland, New Jersey, and Rhode Island are collaborating in issuing this RFP for evaluations of their LSTA five-year plans. It is understood that each state will receive a complete and separate evaluation of its five-year plan from the successful bidder. We believe that having a common consultant and uniform format, process, and tools (such as survey instruments, focus group questions, etc.) will provide economic efficiencies and other benefits for all the state involved.

SCOPE OF WORK

The selected consultant will develop a standard format for surveying statewide programs operated by the six State Library Agencies as described in their *Five Year State Plans for the Library Services and Technology Act 2003-2007*. State five-year plans may be found on line at <http://www.ims.gov/programs/5yearplans.shtm>. The selected consultant may also develop a standard format and process for evaluating LSTA sub-grants made to local libraries by the state library agencies if applicable.

The selected consultant must spend a minimum of three days on site in each of the six states collaborating in this RFP. Onsite time will be spent working with the LSTA Coordinator in each state, gathering information from groups and in conducting focus groups or gathering information from groups, individuals, and/or committees as designated by the State Library Agency in that state. The selected consultant must submit a separate evaluation report directed to and about each of the participating states by February 28, 2007. These reports will be in a format suitable for immediately forwarding to IMLS. Examples of previous LSTA Evaluation Reports may be found at <http://stateprograms.ims.gov/documents/5YrEval/1998-2002EvalRpts/98-02EvalRptsLinks.htm>

EVALUATION DESIGN

The consultant will develop a uniform survey instrument that will be used as an evaluation tool by the participating member states. The consultant will also design a process for gathering, within each participating member state, relevant data for evaluation. Data instruments or focus group techniques may be a part of the recommended process. This survey instrument and process must comply with all IMLS requirements as described in I.1 A and B above. This survey instrument will be disseminated and collected by each SLA who will then forward the completed instruments to the consultant for analysis and report development.

Proposal Content

Description of Services

- Provide a statement of work as to how required services will be accomplished.
- Present a proposed method for providing the services required and a specific timeline including start and end dates for each state.
- Propose a plan that responds to Scope of Work outlined above.

Relevant Experience and Education

- Describe work experience that contributes to the qualifications needed to perform the work required by this RFP.
- List the types of services customarily offered
- Describe any experience with evaluating statewide programs.
- If subcontractors will be involved, please provide a resume of previous work experience which qualifies them to work on this project.
- Describe any educational background that helped provide the relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry out a statewide evaluation project.

Project Budget

Applicants must present a budget for completing the activities requested in the RFP and set forth in their description of services. The budget should be organized by type of activity proposed. An hourly rate and a total for each activity should be indicated. Office expenses, support staff, incidentals etc. are to be covered by contract funds, and need not be separately itemized.

A desired payment schedule for the contract fee should be included.

PROCESS FOR SELECTION

A Planning Committee consisting of one representative from each of the six participating State Library Agencies will review the proposals and select the consultant whose proposal most closely meets the needs described in this RFP. Proposals will also be evaluated on how completely requirements for information have been given. The Committee may invite submitters of top scored proposals for an interview. Interviews may be by conference call. Selection of the consultant will be made no later than July 1, 2006

PROJECTED TIMELINE

2006

May

Develop and circulate an RFP for an outside consultant

May 15 Release RFP
June 15 All applicant responses due by 4:30 p.m. No faxes are allowed.
Electronic submissions are encouraged with the addition of one signed copy of the proposal postmarked June 15.
July 1 Consultant selected
July-Sept Survey design, data collection, data analysis
Oct.-Dec. Prepare draft report

2007

Jan 21 Final draft reports due to States
March 31 Five Year Evaluations submitted to IMLS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS SUBMISSION DATE: June 15, 2006

One original plus six proposals submitted in response to this Request for Proposals must be received by 4:30 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on June 15, 2006. Proposals which arrive after this date and time will not be considered and will be returned to the sender. Proposals should be submitted to:

**J. Gary Nichols
Maine State Library
64 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0064**

Electronic responses may be sent to Linda.lord@maine.gov

RESPONSES

Any questions regarding this Request for Proposals should be directed by e-mail to:
Linda Lord at Linda.lord@maine.gov