

July 2006

Draft for Consolidation into IMLS of the Public and State Library Statistics Programs and of the National Commission of Library and Information Science's Activities

Executive Summary

The President's Budget Request for FY 2007 states:

"The Administration proposes the consolidation of the National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS), as well as the current National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) programs for public and state library statistics into the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), beginning in federal fiscal year 2008. The Administration believes that this move will strengthen federal library policy efforts and enhance our national research capacity on domestic and international library trends."

As the primary federal agency dedicated to library service, IMLS has a significant interest in the successful continuation of these statistics programs, and in assuming the responsibility of national library and information policy. Developing information policy that supports lifelong learning in our knowledge society is core to the authority provided to IMLS by the Museum and Library Services Act. The Administration's proposal enhances the agency's role in public library and state library data collection and establishes IMLS as the key federal agency with responsibility for library and information policy.

The library statistics program has a long and important history, and has been under the auspices of NCES since 1988. It is essential that federal, state, and local officials, professional associations, local practitioners, researchers, and policy makers have access to timely and accurate data and analysis to inform library and information policy, planning, evaluation, and research. That is why it is so important that responsibility for these data collections be assumed by the one federal agency whose core mission is most closely aligned with library and information policy, the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Individuals and organizations with an interest in information policy in a knowledge age can be assured that IMLS will build upon the strong foundation and relationships that are in place and will find new ways to add value and enhance the use and usefulness of the data.

Together the NCES, the U.S. Census Bureau, and the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science have played important roles in the library statistics programs. IMLS is working cooperatively with all three agencies toward a seamless transition and transfer. The Census Bureau will continue the collection and analysis of the data and the preparation of reports, and IMLS will build upon its existing capacity to take on the statistics programs currently administered through NCES and NCLIS, as well as the policy functions of NCLIS.

Further, there is a significant need for a strong voice within the federal government to provide advice and guidance on domestic and international library and information policy. Since its inception, IMLS has been involved in both national and international library and information policy. With the addition of new responsibilities IMLS will be better able to meet its statutory responsibility to "identify national needs and trends of library services," and will strengthen its ability to contribute to information policy by conducting studies, surveys and analyses of library and information needs of the Nation; appraising the

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effectiveness of current library and information services programs to meet national needs; and promoting planning, research, and development activities in coordination with national and international networks.

This document describes progress to date in planning and provides an implementation schedule to transfer responsibility for the public and state library statistics programs currently administered by the National Center for Education Statistics to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. It also includes plans for the consolidation of the functions and responsibilities of the National Commission on Library and Information Science into IMLS. Included are sections on current partners and their functions; consultation with constituents; an overview plan with highlights of activities for the planning (FY 06), transition (FY 07), and full implementation (FY 08) years; and a statement on goals and values that will guide the transition process. IMLS looks forward to strengthening its role in the development of library and information policy and will work with the library community to ensure that the high level of public service provided by the current system continues.

Current Partners

Numerous federal, state, and local agencies, professional organizations, and committees currently work together to produce the public and state library statistics, and to ensure the uniformity of collection. Following is a description of the roles of some of the key partners.

The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) formally initiated and funded a nationwide Library Statistics Cooperative Program in 1989 that includes annual surveys on academic libraries, public libraries, school library media centers, and state library agencies. NCES works collaboratively with the Census Bureau and the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science to plan survey content and to collect, process, and disseminate the data. NCES also sponsors data analysis projects, meetings, training workshops, and training and technical assistance grants. Under a 1988 amendment (P.L. 100-297) to the General Education Provisions Act, NCES was authorized to support a cooperative system of annual data collection for public libraries; this cooperative system is included in the National Education Statistics Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-382), and is updated in the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (P.L. 107-279) [Sec. 157 Cooperative Education Statistics Systems]:

“The Statistics Center may establish one or more national cooperative educational statistics systems for the purpose of producing and maintaining, with the cooperation of the States, comparable and uniform information and data on early childhood education, elementary and secondary education, postsecondary education, adult education and libraries, that are useful for policymaking at the Federal, State and local levels.”

The U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) advises the President and Congress on national and international library and information policies, assesses library and information resources and services, and develops overall plans for meeting national library and information needs.

One of the main functions of NCLIS is to work cooperatively with the National Center for Education Statistics in implementing the Library Statistics Cooperative Program. NCLIS also serves as a liaison to the library community, organizes meetings and training workshops, organizes training and technical assistance, monitors trends, and advises NCES on policy matters.

The Library Statistics Cooperative Program sponsors three awards relating to the public and state library surveys, which are administered through NCLIS. Two awards are for timely submission of the data -- the

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John G. Lorenz Award for timely and accurate submission of state library agency data, and the Francis Keppel award for submission of prompt, complete, and high quality public library data. The third award, the Helen M. Eckard Award, is for exemplary use of public library data.

A fourth award, the Mary Jo Lynch award, which encourages library school student statistical research using public library data collected at the state and national level, is jointly sponsored by the National Center for Education Statistics, the American Library Association, , the National Commission for Library and Information Science, the Public Library Association, and the Federal-State Cooperative System.

The Federal-State Cooperative System (FSCS) for public libraries is a cooperative program between the federal government and the states. Each state is responsible for financing data collection about its public libraries, and for submitting that data to NCES. The federal government, through NCES, is responsible for planning the data collection, collecting, and editing the data and disseminating it. The FSCS steering committee advises NCES on survey content, data collection, dissemination of data, and training. NCES funds FSCS and the public libraries survey, and works collaboratively with the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science and the Census Bureau to implement the public libraries survey. IMLS serves as a non-voting member of the FSCS steering committee.

State Library Steering Committee has a comparable role in contributing to the administration of the state library agencies survey as does the FSCS steering committee for the public libraries survey. The state library agency survey steering committee was recommended by the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies in 1992. Its charge includes identifying issues that the survey will address, advising on data elements and definitions, assisting in planning and carrying out the state library agencies survey, and recommending special studies. The survey collects data from 50 states and the District of Columbia about state library agency inputs, outputs, resources, and operating expenditure data. IMLS serves as a voting member of the state library agency survey steering committee.

The Census Bureau works cooperatively with NCES in implementing the library statistics program and plays a key role in data collection, processing, and dissemination activities. The Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. In addition to the decennial census, the Census Bureau collects data and undertakes statistical analyses for private industry as well as for other government agencies. Through inter-agency agreements, the Census Bureau has provided high quality service to NCES since the early years of the library statistics program. The Census Bureau has also sought to improve the timeliness, accuracy, and relevance of the library surveys through new applications of technologies and methodologies. Additionally, the staff have served as key liaisons with survey respondents. The Census Bureau is committed to continuing its role in the library statistics program, and IMLS enjoys a strong, longstanding and successful working relationship with them in this endeavor.

Constituent consultation

With the announcement of the President's budget in February, IMLS began to identify and meet with key constituent groups. IMLS has met with staff and Commissioners of NCLIS, staff of the National Center for Educational Statistics, the steering committees of the two surveys, and the Census Bureau on numerous occasions between February and June 2006 to discuss the history, assets, resources, staff, costs, management and organization, documents, contracts, etc. of each agency.

February - IMLS met with museum and library service organizations (e.g., American Library Association, American Association of Museums) to brief them on the President's FY 07 budget request.

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March and June - IMLS met with the National Museum and Library Services Board to discuss the consolidation of the activities and responsibilities of NCLIS and of the library statistics programs. The Board recognized the important opportunity for having a greater impact on information policy provided by the consolidation of public and state library statistics and the activities of NCLIS into IMLS. The Board emphasized the need to ensure that IMLS has the necessary financial and personnel resources to carry out the additional functions and encouraged the agency to work collaboratively to assure that institutional knowledge would be transferred to IMLS.

March - IMLS met separately with the steering committees of both the public library and state library surveys and the NCLIS Commissioners to present a transition schedule and to hear comments and concerns about the transfer of the surveys from the Department of Education to IMLS and the consolidation of NCLIS activities into IMLS.

April - The public library steering committee sent out a survey to the state data coordinators (ca. 50) and received 38 responses. Twenty-three of the respondents answered the questions about the transfer of the library statistics program to IMLS. Most responses expressed optimism about the success of the statistics programs and IMLS's ability to assume the program.

April/June- IMLS received an e-mail from a member of the research community asking for inclusion in discussions of the transfer.

April/May - IMLS attended both the full COSLA (Chief Officers of State Library Administrative Agencies) meeting and the membership meeting of the Western Council of State Libraries for open exchanges of interests and concerns regarding the consolidation transitions.

May - IMLS met with both the executive administrative staff and the NCLIS Commissioners to identify program commonalities and discuss priorities for consolidation. IMLS also received a discussion draft from the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) and the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) Legislative committees. The draft called upon IMLS to recognize the importance of providing leadership with respect to policy development, research, and statistics. IMLS hosted a working luncheon with members of the library community to gather their views on library issues and priorities.

The American Library Association Executive Committee issued a statement that called for the protection and preservation of activities now administered through NCLIS, as well as assurance of adequate funding and staff to assume the library statistics program now based at the National Center for Educational Statistics.

June – IMLS met with the steering committee of the public libraries survey. IMLS reported on its activities between March and June, answered questions, and listened to concerns about the transfer of the surveys to IMLS.

IMLS will continue similar discussions at meetings throughout the summer and invites public comment on its draft implementation plan.

Overview Plan

This section presents an overview of some assumptions that will guide the process, some general target activities for the period FY 06-08; and the main goals and values that will guide the transition and transfer.

Current and future budgeting commitments

- The President's FY 07 budget request proposes that the statistical program will be funded by NCES through FY 07.
- In addition, the President's FY 07 budget request proposes to provide IMLS with sufficient funds to build needed infrastructure and begin the transfer.
- The President's FY 08 and out year budget requests will propose sufficient funding to fully support the public and state library statistics programs and the activities envisioned from the consolidation of other library information policy functions into IMLS.
- The President's FY 08 and out year budget requests will propose sufficient funds to support the conversion of current NCES and NCLIS library statistics FTEs into IMLS staff positions and staffing levels and expertise for other library and information policy functions into IMLS.

Staffing assumptions

- All current NCLIS FTE levels will transfer to IMLS
- Staff equivalent to current NCES support for the two statistics collections will be added to IMLS staff FTE
- Additional IT staff may be added to manage databases, user interfaces, data accessibility, and other IT needs resulting from the transfers.

FY 06 -- Planning

IMLS is working with NCES and the Census Bureau to develop a detailed schedule and plan for the transfer of surveys. IMLS has met and will continue to meet with program staff at NCLIS, NCES and at the Census Bureau to ensure continuity of data collection, analysis, and publication of the two surveys through the FY 07 transition, and to establish procedures for continuity in the FY08 consolidation.

IMLS has met with NCES staff to outline the schedule of clearance activities with OMB. IMLS has discussed with OMB about the process for transferring the information collections from NCES to IMLS.

IMLS has met with NCLIS concerning its functions and activities and information policy and other issues relating to the consolidation.

IMLS is looking at the activities covered under inter-agency agreements and contracts, and their current schedules, and is assessing when best to phase in new agreements and contracts in accordance with the data processing schedules already in place. IMLS will begin work on an inter-agency agreement with the Census Bureau, which will be in effect for FY 08.

IMLS is working with the Census Bureau to ensure continuity of the Web interfaces that are currently used for the two data collections and edit processes.

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IMLS is analyzing its human capital needs and appropriate alignment and placement within the agency to accommodate the consolidation of the public and state library statistics programs and NCLIS activities. Currently, IMLS anticipates hiring staff in FY 07, reaching a full level by the beginning of FY 08.

In August 2006 a final implementation plan will be developed, and in September, 2006 IMLS will submit its FY 08 budget request to OMB reflecting the implementation plan.

In September 2006, the National Museum Library Services Board will be briefed on the transition and implementation plan.

FY 07 – Transition

IMLS will task a top-tier position that will report directly to the IMLS Director and coordinate with other IMLS offices to strategically manage this work.

IMLS will continue to meet with NCLIS staff, its Commissioners, NCES and the Census Bureau to ensure continuity of data collection, analysis, and publication of the two surveys through the FY 07 transition, and to establish procedures for continuity in the FY08 consolidation.

IMLS will continue consultation with constituents.

IMLS will begin the initial transfer of activities for the surveys and will begin hiring staff to administer the two surveys and to take on the functions of NCLIS.

To assure a seamless transition, no changes will be made in data collection schedule or data elements for the two surveys during the FY 07 year.

IMLS will be the lead agency in managing the consolidation and will continue to work with NCES, NCLIS, and the Census Bureau.

The President's FY 08 budget request will be finalized and made public in February 2007.

FY 08 – Full Implementation

IMLS is fully staffed to administer the library statistics program and to take on the policy functions of NCLIS.

IMLS anticipates transferring of FTE levels from NCLIS and NCES and anticipates including these and other functions: program manager, statistician/data analyst, policy analyst, steering committee liaison, print/electronic editor, additional IT and staff support.

The FY 08 Budget for IMLS will provide financial and FTE resources to enable it to take on functions currently being provided by NCES and NCLIS. In FY 08 IMLS will enter into an inter-agency agreement with the Census Bureau to continue its role in the data collection, conduct data quality checks, edits and imputations analysis, provide the web-based interface for data collection, preparation of the data for publication, and web access to current and historical data for the two surveys. IMLS expects to enter into contracts for services related to web maintenance and support, and meeting and conference support.

Goals and Values

IMLS has worked with constituents to identify the following goals and values. IMLS will use these to guide the transition and transfer of the surveys from NCES, as well as the transfer of NCLIS functions – both its coordination of the surveys, as well as its broader information policy mission.

Constituent Involvement

- IMLS will continue to consult with the library community on information policy issues.
- IMLS will continue to administer the library statistics programs as a cooperative effort and will engage all partners in an inclusive, respectful, and responsive process. The collection of public library and state library statistics will continue as a voluntary program between state governments and the federal government.
- Through the planning, transition, and implementation process, IMLS will encourage input to help build a strong statistics program that serves the needs of all constituents.
- IMLS will support steering committees and will work to enhance participation.
- IMLS will coordinate steering committees and their subcommittees for the public and state library statistics programs on the administration, maintenance, and development of the surveys and the dissemination and accessibility of products, tools, and other resources.
- IMLS will seek the involvement of researchers, policy makers and other users of the data.
- IMLS recognizes that steering committee engagement and training of data coordinators are essential for a successful program.
- Recommendations for adding or removing data elements will follow a transparent process with substantial involvement of the steering committees and other partners.
- IMLS will work with existing organizations and groups to continue to promote 100% response rates from public and state libraries.

Information Policy

- IMLS will increase its engagement in the development of domestic and international information and library policies.
- IMLS will continue to promote research and development activities to extend and improve library services in the U.S., including undertaking studies that assess national library and informational needs.
- IMLS will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of current library and information science resources, services, and programs.
- IMLS will participate in the development and maintenance of library and information standards through the National Information Standards Organization (NISO).
- IMLS will continue the information policy role for academic and school library media center surveys, as currently carried out by NCLIS.

Integrity and Reliability of Library Statistics Data

- IMLS will enter into an inter-agency agreement with the Census Bureau to collect data and conduct data quality checks, edits, and imputations, prepare publications, and deliver products to IMLS for the two surveys. The Census Bureau will manage the data according to Census Bureau Section 515 Information Quality Guidelines.
- Data will be reviewed by IMLS statistics program staff and technical review team and IMLS will maintain final authority for approval and release of the data.
- IMLS will continue annual training for state data coordinators and will work with both the steering committees and the Census Bureau staff to enhance the efficiency of training.
- IMLS will work with OMB/Office of Regulatory Affairs and the Census Bureau to continue the current schedule for the public libraries and state library agencies statistical collections, in particular the schedules for data collection, editing, imputation, preparing publications, and the delivery of products for the two surveys.
- IMLS will develop a records management schedule to ensure the transfer and archiving of historical and current documents adheres to federal standards.

Timeliness of Library Statistics Data

- IMLS is committed to working with constituents, clients, and contractors to deliver the most reliable and valid statistics in a timely manner. IMLS will work with the Census Bureau to establish and maintain schedules and procedures for timely release of data while maintaining the highest data quality.
- IMLS is committed to releasing data for use by the states as promptly as possible.
- IMLS will work with partners to make the collection, edit and review processes as efficient as possible.
- In addition, IMLS will work with the Census Bureau and steering committees to identify the potential for streamlining procedures that could reduce the amount of time between initial collection of data and the release of data and reports.
- IMLS will work with partners to continue to make awards recognizing the timely and accurate submission of public and state library data.

Usefulness of Library Statistics Data

- IMLS will work with constituents to promote the usefulness of the data at local, state and federal levels. IMLS will meet with representatives of the ALA, COSLA, FSCS and state library survey steering committees, the library research community, and other constituents to learn how the data are currently used, identify new data sets, ascertain ways to reduce redundant or burdensome collection points, advance more robust data collection and discuss ways data collections could be improved to better serve the needs of these constituents.
- IMLS will authorize the Census Bureau to maintain both current and historical files for the two surveys in accessible formats.
- The public library and state library statistics data will be maintained in accordance with Census Bureau IT standards.

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- IMLS will continue the availability of useful tools such as the Compare Libraries Tool and will work with the steering committees and other constituents to identify and develop additional tools.
- IMLS statistics program staff will conduct and promote policy analysis of the data.
- IMLS will work with partners to continue to recognize and award statistical research using public library data and innovative use of the public library data.

Dissemination of Library Statistics Data and Publications

- IMLS will seek to identify information dissemination strategies appropriate to the public and state library statistics programs.
- IMLS will develop strategies with the IMLS Office of Public and Legislative Affairs to increase the visibility of the availability and importance of the data and ensure that core data elements are of practical and lasting use to policymakers and librarians.
- IMLS will work with constituents to inventory and evaluate the files currently housed on NCES and NCLIS websites to select those that should be maintained as web-accessible resources and those that should be archived. IMLS will work with NCES to determine the procedures to transfer the authority for historical data sets, files, and publications to IMLS.

Security of Library Statistics Data

- The Census Bureau maintains a robust information technology infrastructure that meets or exceeds security standards required under the Federal Information Security Management Act, including disaster recovery and continuity of operations plans. IMLS and the Census Bureau will determine the appropriate procedure for redundant and duplicate warehousing of data sets, files, and publications.

Questions and Comments

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