

Section 3. Planning

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAN

3.1 Provide a summary describing the processes used to assess needs in the development of the Plan of Service.

Mid-Hudson Library System (MHLS) engaged its member libraries in an assessment of member library needs beginning in 2010, a process that was intensified and completed in 2011, and that ended in a system-wide consensus for the MHLS Plan of Service for 2012-2016.

In the fall of 2010, system staff led two system advisory committees in a preliminary needs-assessment. The Continuing Education and Professional Development Advisory Committee conducted a visioning exercise in October. The Resource Sharing Advisory Committee performed a SWOT analysis of resource sharing by member libraries in November.

In 2011, beginning in February and ending in April, system staff broadened the process by scheduling 20 focus group sessions that included 244 participants from member libraries. The sessions were held at MHLS as well as at member libraries in each of the Library System's five counties. Participants were asked to brainstorm responses to two questions: What were their challenges? What were their opportunities? Additionally, participants were encouraged to identify trends in the services they provided their communities and what they thought their communities were saying about them. Summaries of these assessments were compiled, shared with participants and member libraries, and published on the MHLS website.

3.2 Identify the groups involved in development of the Plan of Service and each group's role.

Participation by member libraries and the Mid-Hudson Library System community was inclusive and broad-based in all phases of the plan development. In the fall of 2010, the Continuing Education and Professional Development Resource Sharing Advisory Committees were involved in a preliminary needs assessment. In 2011, participation included all major member library stakeholders as well as system staff, the System's advisory committees, the Directors Association, the MHLS Board of Trustees Planning and Development Committee, and two special ad hoc committees, one for the Direct Access Plan and one for System Services.

Participation in the needs-assessment was especially inclusive in 2011. System staff scheduled 20 focus groups sessions in which 244 member library trustees, directors, staff and friends from 63 libraries and 5 correctional facilities participated. Separate sessions were held in each county for trustees and directors. There were two sessions for youth services staff and two sessions for circulation and the integrated library system--Millennium--staff. Additional sessions were held for trustees, adult programers, assistant directors, friends, outreach staff and correctional services librarians. System staff compiled summaries of the priorities identified in each of the sessions. A

list of priorities common to all the sessions was compiled in an “executive summary” of member library needs.

The MHLS Board of Trustees Personnel and Planning Committee reviewed the executive summary of needs on May 2. The Directors Association met on May 3. It used the executive summary to conduct some initial goal-setting and identification of intended results, and to confirm that its priorities were inclusive of their libraries’ needs. These initial goals and intended results were reviewed by the MHLS Trustees Personnel and Planning Committee on May 5.

Each of the System’s advisory committees met once through the end of June to complete the goals and intended results in their areas of oversight begun by the Directors Association. The standing advisory committees of the System are Outreach, Continuing Education and Professional Development, Resource Sharing, Marketing, and Central Library and Collection Development. Each is chaired by a member library director, supported by system staff, and includes representatives from each of the System’s five counties. The Outreach Advisory Committee includes social service providers drawn from the System’s entire service area.

A Systems Services Ad Hoc Committee, which was formed from the Directors Association, met to oversee and review plan development as well. It was chaired by a member library director and included the System Executive Director, system staff, the Director of the System’s Central Library, and representatives from each of the System’s five counties. The committee met twice in June to review and revise goals and their intended results, which had been developed by the advisory committees. The committee also reviewed and revised the methods of evaluation, which system staff had drafted, and added outcome-based evaluation where it thought appropriate.

The MHLS Trustees Personnel and Planning Committee met in June and July to review the entire plan for clarity and consistency. In addition, the committee delegated the System’s advisory committees with the responsibility to determine when the plan would be in need of revision. It also directed the advisory committees to validate patron satisfaction with system-wide surveys.

Early in 2011, MHLS formed an Ad Hoc Direct Access Plan Committee that included system staff, the System Director and member directors, including the Director of the System’s Central Library. It met three times to review the current Direct Access Plan and Commissioners Regulations 90.3. It examined circulation and other data to set the thresholds at which serious inequities and hardships could be determined. A draft of the revised plan was reviewed and approved by the Directors Association after changes. The draft was then reviewed by the MHLS Trustees Personnel and Planning Committee. The Board committee then recommended it to the MHLS Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees reviewed, discussed, and approved the revised Direct Access Plan on July 13.

3.3 Describe the planning process for the 2012-2016 Central Library Plan.

System staff and the System Executive Director drafted the Central Library Plan in consultation with the Central Library Director and staff, and in reference to the relevant priorities of member library needs. The Central Library and Collection Development Advisory Committee reviewed, revised and completed the plan on June 8.

The Systems Services Ad Hoc Committee, which included the Director of the Central Library, also reviewed the Central Library Plan, as did the MHLS Trustee Personnel and Planning Committee.

3.4 Identify the groups involved in development of the 2012-2016 Central Library Plan and each group's role.

Central Library staff and system staff drafted an initial plan. The plan was reviewed and revised by the Central Library and Collection Development Advisory Committee on June 8. The committee includes representatives from each of the System's five counties and the System Executive Director. The committee is supported by the Director of the Central Library and System staff. The plan was also reviewed by the Systems Services Ad Hoc Committee on June 21. This ad hoc committee included the System Executive Director, the Central Library Director, System staff, and representatives from each of the System's five counties. It was next reviewed by the Board of Trustees Planning and Personnel Committee on June 28. The Directors Association reviewed the Central Library Plan along with the System Plan of Service on July 8. A final review by the Board of Trustees Planning and Personnel Committee was on July 12, which recommended it for MHLS Board of Trustees' review. The MHLS Board met to review the Central Library Plan on July 13.

3.5 Describe the integration of the 2012-2016 Central Library Plan with the system's Plan of Service.

The Central Library Plan describes the services funded by state aid for Central Library Development Aid and Central Book Aid. Central Library goals and results fall under several elements of the Mid-Hudson's Plan of Service. Goals and results were identified under the general rubric of Resource Sharing and included the development of digital collections, supplemental adult non-fiction collections, and system-wide collection management and use analysis. Central library goals and results also support system services in Delivery and ILL. The goals and results for reference services address two areas in the Plan of Service, Coordinated Services and Resource Sharing. System professional development efforts are also supplemented by the Central Library, which will provide public-service training and education to member library staff.

Evaluation of the Central Library services, collections and programs will include ongoing advisory committee review and quarterly reports to the MHLS Board of Trustees. Number of sessions and number of participants and topics covered will be documented for the training and education of member library staff. Member libraries will be surveyed for their satisfaction with the opportunities to learn about collection management and the usefulness of the collection analysis

provided them. Outcome-based surveys of training participants and of member library staff using the analysis the Central Library will provide will seek to determine levels of change in participant and member library staff behavior, skills and knowledge.

For collections, costs and data on the level and patterns of use will be regularly compiled and shared with the advisory committee and MHLS Board of Trustees. The advisory committee will determine ways to validate patron satisfaction on a biannual basis.

APPROVAL OF THE PLAN

3.6 Describe the process for approval of the Plan of Service. School library systems must include the Council's role in the approval.

Inclusion, agreement and consensus were integral to the plan's development throughout the planning process. Initial drafts of the MHLS's goals and results were reviewed, revised and approved by the Resource Sharing Advisory Committee on May 9, by the Continuing Education and Professional Development Advisory Committee on May 12, by the Marketing Committee on June 7, and by the Central Library and Collection Development Advisory Committee on June 7. Drafts of the complete Plan of Service, including the Central Library Plan, were reviewed and completed by the Systems Services Ad Hoc Committee on June 21 and June 23, and by the MHLS Trustees Personnel and Planning Committee on June 28 and July 12. A final draft of the plan was submitted to the Directors Association for review on July 8. The Directors Association approved it on September 8. The plan was submitted to the MHLS Board of Trustees for its review on May 5. The Board of Trustees approved the plan on September 14.

An initial revision of the Direct Access Plan was submitted to the Directors Association in April by the Direct Access Plan Ad Hoc Committee, but subsequently underwent a number of revisions. A draft of the Direct Access Plan was also shared with Mid-Hudson's liaison at the Division of Library Development, who provided her advice on the plan's development as well. The Directors Association voted and approved a final draft of the plan, with some last minute clarifications and amendments, on May 3. A majority of the member libraries were present at the meeting and approval was unanimous. The Direct Access Plan was reviewed and approved by the MHLS Trustee Personnel and Planning Committee on May 5. The Direct Access Plan was presented to the MHLS Board of Trustees for its review on May 5 and approved on July 13.

EVALUATION

3.7 Describe the information to be collected in order to evaluate and determine members' satisfaction with the System's services.

Periodic review and analysis for services and programs by the advisory committees charged with overseeing each element of the plan are essential to the evaluation of System services. The analysis by advisory committees include cost and other data and patterns and level of use, as well as evaluations of System information, tools and initiatives. Elements in the plan that specifically

call for advisory committee analysis include Cooperative Collection Development, Integrated Library System, ILL, Coordinated Outreach, Professional Development, and Awareness and Advocacy.

The Professional Development and Continuing Education Advisory Committee is specifically charged with determining changing member library needs. In addition, this committee will review the evaluation of attendees of each System professional development session. Outcome-based surveys will also be conducted by the committee for selected sessions to determine levels of change in behavior, skills, or knowledge of the participating directors and trustees.

Outcome-based surveys to determine levels of change in participant behavior, skills, or knowledge will also be conducted for Consulting and Development Services, Awareness and Advocacy, and Construction.

Surveys of member libraries will be conducted on nearly all elements of the Plan of Service. These surveys will help determine member library satisfaction with System services, programs and initiatives. The data gathered in these surveys will be used by system staff and the System's advisory committees to identify improvements. Surveys to assess the impact of these services on director and trustee skills, behavior and knowledge will also be conducted. The Resource Sharing Advisory Committee will determine ways to directly analyze and validate patron satisfaction with system collections and the ILS, which are new assessment in the MHLS Plan of Service.

Output measures will also be used extensively and shared with system advisory committees, particularly in the areas of Consulting and Development Services, Professional Development, Coordinated Services, Communication Among Member Libraries, and Construction. Numbers of member libraries and numbers of participants attending training will be counted and reviewed. Numbers and topics of consultations, number of visits to libraries will also be compiled. Numbers of coordinated service opportunities will be documented. Numbers of networking sessions, topics, attendance and session evaluations in support of communication among libraries will be recorded. Numbers and topics of consultations and number of visits to member libraries will also be reported to advisory committees. Percentages of the annual NYS construction fund allotment awarded to member libraries will be documented as well.

New to the MHLS Plan of Service will be documentation of visits by MHLS Trustees to member libraries and member library boards, which will include follow-up reports to the MHLS Board of Trustees.

Finally, review of and response to anecdotal comments by system staff to ensure continuous improvement are important in every area of the plan, but are specifically prescribed for Cooperative Collection Development, Integrated Library System, ILL, and Communications Among Member Libraries. Instructors of professional development and continuing education sessions will also conduct self-evaluations in an effort to continually improve instruction.

3.10 Describe how the information on customer satisfaction will be used to shape the System's plan in the next year or in the following planning cycle.

Customer satisfaction is a primary focus of the plan. The evaluative data gathered will be used by the advisory committees and system staff to adjust areas of the plan identified in need of change, which will ensure continuous improvement and maximize member library and end-user satisfaction.

REVISION PROCESS

3.11 Describe the process for revising the system's Plan of Service for submission to the New York State Education Department/New York State Library.

Need for a revision of goals, results and evaluation methods may be identified by any of the System's advisory committees, the System's Executive Director, by a deciding vote of the Directors Association, or by the MHLS Board of Trustees, but approval by the Directors Association and the MHLS Board of Trustees will be required for revisions to be submitted to the New York State Education Department and New York State Library. In areas that do not presently have oversight by a system advisory committee, ad hoc committees will be established from the Directors Association to review and recommend possible revisions. Otherwise, the review and recommendation of possible revisions fall to the System's advisory committees.