

Coalition Nears December Deadline

In late August, the Public Library Coalition launched efforts to coalesce a statewide library community around strategies to manage the impact of local government and property tax reforms on Indiana's public libraries.

Its work to date integrates findings from ALA research, key informant interviews, a survey of library directors and trustees, and 18 focus groups conducted in six regional settings.

The work focused initially on two independent variables: (1) *the need for individual citizen access to services* and (2) *the importance of community self determination in providing those services*. Based on focus group input, a third lens was added to the deliberative framework: (3) *the role of high performance standards in sustaining a nationally recognized statewide library system*.

Among the Coalition's working assumptions:

- Indiana libraries face huge economic, technological, and service delivery challenges over the next decade – *change requiring multiple efforts on multiple fronts*.
- Indiana's public library community has demonstrated over the past decade a significant capacity for managing change, experience which allows it to be a leader in local community responses to the challenges of change and reform.
- Maintaining control of our own destiny begins with our internal alignment – without delay. *Otherwise, decisions affecting our future will be made by others*.

As the foundation for new service delivery, financing, or governance models, the Coalition presents a set of strategies for achieving internal alignment within the library community:

1. A substantial strengthening of **trustee leadership** at both the local and state levels
2. A legislatively supported plan to **remove barriers to full citizen access**
3. New, more **timely performance standards** which ensure high service quality and statewide service consistency
4. **Statewide integration of new technologies** which strengthen both library services and local community economies
5. **New ISL technical assistance and transition support services** to ensure the successful management of change

Building on that foundation, the Coalition recommends a continuum of optional library service models that begin with a **required County Level Service Planning Process**. The concept, a blend of *local community determination* and *universal access* strategies, requires a formal service plan at the county level which ensures

- **Full service coverage** within that county;
- Libraries which **meet or exceed specific statewide service standards**; and
- A **multi-year funding plan** which ensures both.

The current draft of a service continuum includes five potential planning models. *All models are expected to incorporate the same basic elements*:

Model Criteria

1. Local decision making
2. Recognition of unique local community needs
3. Full services and full funding countywide
4. Countywide capacity to meet statewide performance standards
5. Collaborative initiatives which leverage all resources
6. The collection of data to quantify new efficiencies
7. Annual planning and evaluation processes which ensure continued improvement strategies
8. Funding plans which anticipate financial sustainability for the next decade

Optional Models: Service, Governance & Funding

1. Two or more systems within a county	2. One consolidated countywide system	3. A multi-system and/or multi-county <i>Alliance</i>	4. A multi-system or multi-county <i>Federation</i>	5. A Regional <i>Consolidated System</i>
County funding and service plan includes service delivery by two or more existing, independently governed systems <i>able to meet Model Criteria</i> .	County funding and service plan develops a service and funding plan which <i>meets Model Criteria</i> .	To Options 1 or 2, the county adds voluntary collaborating and system sharing among two or more systems (full reciprocity, "best practice" orientation) to achieve new economies of scale. Systems remain independent.	To 1 or 2, the county includes a formally contracted relationship among multiple systems <i>to create a shared management system</i> . Retains current governance and funding structures, although may add other governance and funding features at the federation level.	The County funding and service plan provides for full consolidation with one or more additional counties, <i>the resulting system able to meet Model Criteria</i> .

Each model is being further developed to delineate: the primary goals for the model; key organizational characteristics; benefits and challenges associated with the model; and environments in which the model might work best . **Among the action steps:**

1. **2009 legislation** requiring county service & funding plans which meet Model Criteria, including but not limited to
 - *A county council convening role*
 - *The local planning group composition* (up to 21 participants including library trustees, directors, local government reps, state legislators, reps from untaxed areas, community/civic leaders) *and its leadership* (selection of chair and use of facilitator)
 - *ISL planning grants* (and regional training workshops)
2. **New Performance Standards** ready by 7/1/09 and circulated for review during each planning process.
3. ISL development/management of support services

Draft Timetable

Jan – June, 2009	* Enabling Legislation: Universal Service, County Planning Models * ISL Planning Grants * Standard Planning Format * County Planning Bodies * Regional Training Sessions * Statewide Performance Standards
July – Dec, 2009	County Plans Drafted
Jan-June, 2010	County Budgets Developed To Support Plans
July-December, 2010	ISL report on the statewide impact of plans and budgets
Jan, 2011	State establishes plan for counties unable or unwilling to develop service and funding plans which meet model criteria

NEXT STEPS? GET INVOLVED!

The Coalition meets on November 24 to finalize its work, and presents it at a December 2nd meeting of the ILF Legislative Committee and a December 9th meeting of the ILF Executive Board.

* **Go online** through Nov 21 to rank value of Model Criteria and volunteer to work with the Coalition:
http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2roaUUWHaFiQynmM_2bu3zEA_3d_3d

* **Talk to Coalition Members.** Be familiar with Coalition documents posted on webjunction.