

## **National Library Services Trends**

### **NLST – NFS1: Exploring New Funding Options through Private Partnerships**

As the United States works toward economic improvement, many public library systems are still dealing with steep budget cuts. As a result, libraries are looking at innovative sources of funding to bridge these shortfalls.

Some library systems are turning to businesses and corporations for support. Cathy Deane of the Mount Prospect Public Library spoke at the 2012 PLA Conference about her success in approaching businesses for funding.<sup>1</sup> Deane suggests keeping in mind which businesses are financially sound and those that may have complementary focuses or interests with the library. Deane contacted a local asphalt company who employs a number of non-native English speakers, and they ended up supporting a literacy program. These types of partnerships, says Deane, are important ways to stay connected to the community.

### **Implications for JCPL**

- JCPL should identify library projects that need funding and community partners that may complement these projects.
- Establish relationships with community partners.
- Find ways to demonstrate value of project to partners to ensure ongoing relationship.
- Identify library projects that could benefit from other non-monetary community support, such as staff-time, promotion, equipment, etc.

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<sup>1</sup> Baeckler, J., & Raymond, L. (2012). *Creative funding: How to afford the services your community wants*. PowerPoint presentation at the 2012 PLA Conference, Philadelphia, PA. Retrieved from <http://www.placonference.org/programs>

## **National Library Services Trends**

### **NLST – NFS2: Using Advocacy to Tell the Library’s Story**

Amid the clamor for newer, faster, and more powerful digital entertainment tools (ex: eReaders, eBooks, streaming music and movies, etc.), as well as the concern over shrinking public funds, the voice of the public library can often get lost or overlooked.

Advocacy is a partnership between library staff members and the community to spread the message of the library and its services to non-users, legislators, the business community, and anyone else not convinced of the library’s usefulness and purpose. This is accomplished through:

- Thorough staff education about the library’s story, the advocacy process, and best practices for interacting with skeptical individuals;
- The everyday and consistent use of as many platforms as possible to share the library’s story and needs (ex: social media, print media, word-of-mouth, programs, special events, etc.);
- Personal contact with community stakeholders;
- Transparent, publicized operations that instill a sense of confidence in the public;
- Engaging and attention-grabbing programs geared toward the public’s essential priorities/needs;
- Utilization of patrons who are willing to act as volunteer advocates;
- A consistent and regular strategy that puts advocacy efforts at the forefront of library efforts.<sup>2</sup>

### **Implications for JCPL**

- Staff members must be aware of community needs and priorities.
- Staff members should be educated to ensure consistency of the library’s message.
- Existing relationships with community organizations should be utilized in order to deliver the library message.
- New communication channels should be explored in order to establish and maintain new relationships.
- The library may explore the cultivation of a patron advocacy group.

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<sup>2</sup> Burns, Cindy et. al., “Advocacy is Number One in Times of Shrinking Funding” (presentation, PLA Midwinter Conference, Philadelphia, PA, March 15, 2012).

## **National Library Services Trends**

### **NLST – NFS3: Increasing Number of Library Foundations**

The creation of Library Foundations to supplement library budgets continues to increase as libraries find their funding cut and their need for services increasing. While libraries across the country have depended on their Friends groups for years, some systems are turning to foundations to supplement their budget and to serve as advocacy groups for the library.

Many Library Foundations have come to the realization that grants are a viable way to fund library functions. Because of the lengthy and often complicated process involved in preparing grant proposals, Library Foundations have begun to hire dedicated coordinators, who are responsible for:

- Locating grant opportunities;
- Familiarizing themselves and others in the library with the grant's requirements;
- Researching and gathering the necessary data and documentation;
- Keeping deadlines organized and in view;
- Writing, or organizing others in the library to write, the proposal;
- Submitting all grant materials in a timely manner.

Having a Library Foundation and a grant coordinator not only frees up library staff time, which is better spent on the day to day operations of the library, but it also opens up other possible funding options.

### **Implications for JCPL**

- Library Foundations should continue to be explored.
- JCPL should identify new or existing projects that may benefit from grant funding.
- In the interim, JCPL staff members should continue to build relationships with possible new Friends members and funding partners.