

Foundations of Libraries Competency Set Portfolio Development Suggestions May 4, 2011

These competencies are fundamental to understanding the mission and roles of libraries. These competencies cover the ethics, values and governance of libraries and the basic knowledge needed for all positions in a library.

These Portfolio Development Suggestions (PDS) includes examples of possible activities you might use to demonstrate your achievements for each competency in this set. These activities or activities that you design yourself will be the primary documentation of your achievements for your online portfolio.

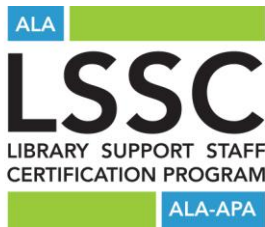
You might recognize some of these activities as experiences you have already had at work. You may also choose to use these as ideas for new self-directed learning projects and ways to demonstrate what you learned.

These are ONLY examples to help you get started thinking about both what experiences you already have related to specific competencies and what new learning you may want to pursue. While you may choose to use some of these suggestions for your Foundations of Libraries portfolio, you may also choose other relevant activities from your experience or new learning activities to demonstrate your proficiency in each competency.

The goal is to demonstrate that you have achieved the competencies. Your documentation may be a written narrative, a video, an audio recording or digitized copies of documents you have already prepared in your work experience. You may submit these documents in any format that can be uploaded into your online portfolio. Remember to make a clear link between the competency and the document so that evaluators will know what competency you are demonstrating. When appropriate, you may also apply documentation for one competency to another competency. If so, indicate that in your portfolio.

Helpful Hints

In order to complete some of the activities you may need to conduct research. This research may be from print resources, web resources, visits to and observations of other libraries and interviews with library staff or library users. If you need to conduct research to complete one of the activities listed below, be sure to cite the resources that you consulted and your personal opinion of what you learned.



Some of the PDSs ask for a bibliography. Usually a bibliography should include notations that are both descriptive and evaluative. Descriptive means your notation briefly describes what is relevant; evaluative means your opinion about what you read.

In some cases, we suggest that you compare and contrast what happens in at least two libraries or other settings. Compare and contrast means that you identify the similarities and differences between the way different libraries or other settings operate. If you currently work in a library, you may use that library as one of the examples. You may use the same type of library for comparison (public OR academic) or different types of libraries (public AND academic). Unless the suggested activity specifically indicates that you should look for examples in BOTH public and academic libraries, you may choose which types you would like to compare and contrast. You can discover how other libraries operate by conducting online research or by visiting another library and interviewing its staff.

You may also be asked to analyze or describe “your community.” Community is a broad term that could mean the community served by a public library or the higher education community served by an academic library.

In Summary

In summary, in order to submit this competency set as completed, you are expected to demonstrate that you have achieved each of the 11 individual competencies in the foundations of libraries competency set. However, you are NOT expected to complete all of the examples listed with each competency.

Good luck as you achieve this competency set.

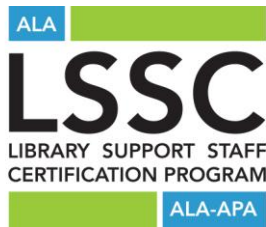
Library Support Staff will know:

Competency 1: The mission and roles of a library in its community and the mission of libraries in general.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

1.1 Research what should be in a mission statement. Review a mission statement from two different types of libraries. Compare and contrast and evaluate these statements. Select a library and identify its roles. How were these roles determined and how do library services reflect these roles?

1.2 Review the Public Library Association’s *Public Library Service Responses* as one way of looking at a public library’s role in its community. Select a public library and describe what factors might determine which of these roles this library might choose



and why. Share your recommendations with at least two staff members at the library and discuss their comments.

1.3 Research what should be in a mission statement. Identify the mission statement of your library or another library and do one of the following:

- a) Write a revision of the mission statement. Explain the process you used and why you made the changes to at least two staff members and discuss their comments.
- b) Recommend no changes in the library's mission statement. Indicate why you feel it meets the criteria of a good mission statement.

Competency 2: The ethics and values of the profession, including an understanding of the Library Bill of Rights, the ALA Code of Ethics, freedom of information, confidentiality of library records, and privacy issues.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

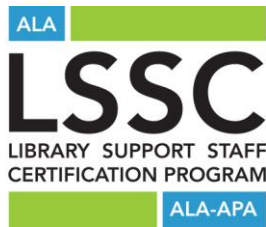
2.1 Review the Library Bill of Rights, the ALA Code of Ethics and any legislation in your state that relates to privacy of library records. Find out if your library or another library's governing body has adopted the Bill of Rights and the ALA Code of Ethics. Using your own library experience, describe a situation in which you have or might have used these documents and laws.

2.2 Please apply the ideas of intellectual freedom, privacy, and confidentiality to tell what you would do in two of the following situations:

- a) The police chief asks you to provide records that document the library use of a person who she thinks is responsible for a series of thefts in the community. The chief explains to you that no one will know that you provided the records.
- b) The dean of students is concerned about a student who has expressed suicidal thoughts. The dean asks you to notify him if the student checks out materials on suicide.
- c) A parent wishes the library to limit his/her child's use of the library to the materials in the children's room.
- d) An alumnus, who has generously contributed to the library, believes that the library should only have materials that promote the community's values.

Competency 3: The roles of Library Support Staff and other staff in libraries.

Portfolio Development Suggestions



3.1 Interview the manager of a department in a large library. Ask her to describe the different types of library staff in the department and give a brief description of their duties. Describe and comment on the differences among staff positions.

3.2 Interview a Library Support Staff and a librarian in the same department. Ask them how their roles differ and how these roles interact. What similarities and differences do you see? Which of these are most important?

Competency 4: The responsibilities of and the relationships among library departments or functional areas.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

4.1 Interview the manager in a library with many departments to find out how these departments interact to produce, distribute, and help library users use information. Draw an organization chart of this library and discuss any changes that you would make in this organization.

4.2 A teenager asks for help with a homework assignment on the civil rights movement and the election of Barack Obama as president. Describe how every department in the library contributes to helping this user. Describe the impact on the student and library staff if any of the library departments do not do their work.

Competency 5: The basic principles of:

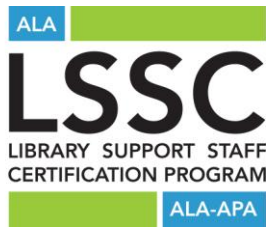
- reference and information services;
- circulation, including interlibrary loan and collection maintenance;
- current cataloging and classification systems;
- acquisitions and collection development.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

5.1 Observe library staff members who work in reference, circulation, cataloging and classification, and acquisitions and collection development for a minimum of three hours. At the conclusion of your observations, summarize what you consider to be the five most important principles associated with that work. Ask the person you observed to review your work and discuss their responses. Revise your original work to show how their opinion did or did not change your own thinking.

Competency 6: How libraries are governed and funded and the place of libraries within organizations or government structures.

Portfolio Development Suggestions



6.1 Identify two possible governing structures for public libraries and two governing structures for academic libraries in your state. Compare and contrast these structures.

6.2 Describe how a library fits into a city or county government structure. What is the organizational structure like? Describe the reporting structure and source of funding. Describe how a library fits into an educational organization. What is the organizational structure like? Describe the reporting structure and source of funding.

Competency 7: The value of cooperating with other libraries to enhance services.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

7.1 Describe at least two cooperative arrangements between any types of libraries. These arrangements may be statewide, national or local networks, or cooperatives. What are the arrangements' benefits and liabilities for their members and for the library user? How does the library promote these services?

7.2 A community member suggests that the library stop cooperating with other libraries because he believes that the library will save money by doing so. Write a short statement explaining why cooperative arrangements are important and cost efficient for library users and libraries.

Competency 8: The value of participating in professional development opportunities, including certification, continuing education, staff development and professional associations.

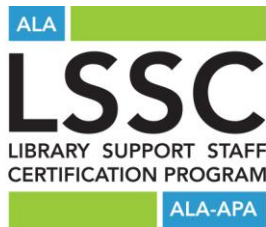
Portfolio Development Suggestions

8.1 Identify three professional development opportunities you have participated in the past two years. How did you change your job performance based on this participation?

8.2 Your state's library association wants to recruit more Library Support Staff (LSS) as members and asks you to develop a statement on the benefits of joining the association. Write a short statement introducing the association's benefits to LSS and tell how you would distribute this statement.

8.3 Money is tight in library budgets. The library director asks you to help her justify keeping dollars in the professional development budget by developing a short statement to the library board or the dean of education. Please share your statement in writing or on video.

Library Support Staff will be able to:



Competency 9: Practice quality customer service.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

9.1 Identify and describe six important elements of customer service. Indicate the sources of your information. Rank the six elements in order of importance and indicate why you put them in that order. Discuss if the elements and rank would be different for a different type of library or a library of a different size.

9.2 Video, audio tape, or provide a script showing examples of poor customer service and good customer service. Describe the differences.

9.3 Describe one new customer service initiative that might benefit a library and discuss how and why it might be effective.

Competency 10: Communicate and promote the library's values and services to staff, volunteers, users, and the community.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

10.1 Describe what you think are your library's top four values. Survey at least four other members of the staff and compare their answers with yours. How are they alike or different and why? How does your library promote its values? How do these values impact services?

10.2 Describe several ways your library has communicated and promoted its values in the past two years. What other opportunities do you see to do this?

Competency 11: Recognize and respond to diversity in user needs and preferences for resources and services.

Portfolio Development Suggestions

11.1 Identify three groups of diverse users that use library services. Describe and evaluate current library services that meet the needs of these groups.

11.2 Identify a group that does not typically use library services. Describe how you would go about assessing their needs, adapting current or adopting new library services, and promoting these services to group members?