



Library Support Staff Certification Program  
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## Library Support Staff Certification Program Final Briefing Document

The LSSCP Advisory Committee presents to you a proposal for a national, voluntary Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP). All documents relating to LSSCP are available at [www.ala-apa.org/lsscp](http://www.ala-apa.org/lsscp), including expanded versions of these topics. **We invite you to look at them.**

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### Background of the Program

The Institute of Museum and Library Services awarded a *Laura Bush - Librarians for the 21st Century* grant to the American Library Association (ALA) and the Western Council of State Libraries to support the “Library Support Staff Certification Program” (LSSCP) project. This project is developing a competency-based certification program for the approximately 160,150 library workers in positions not requiring a Master’s Degree in Library Science. The primary target audience is public and academic library support staff. The project began in July 2007 with the hiring of Karen Strege and Nancy Bolt as Project Directors. An Advisory Committee was formed with representatives from ALA divisions, round tables, committees and the Western Council of State Libraries.

The proposal grew out of many years of studies conducted by ALA and state organizations calling for a certification program for library support staff (LSS). (See <http://www.ala-apa.org/lsscp/LSSCPNarrative.pdf> for the complete grant narrative and for citations to the relevant studies.) One of these relevant studies occurred in 2005 when the ALA Office for Human Resource Development and Recruitment (HRDR) surveyed members of the Library Support Staff Interests Round Table (LSSIRT) about professional development and certification. Over 3,300 responded to the survey. Among the respondents, 86% thought that a certification program would be beneficial; 76% said that nationally recognized professional standards were important; and 66% supported a national certification program to help them provide better service and grow in their understanding of librarianship.

Another stimulus for the current project was the 2003 ALA Congress on Professional Education III (COPE III). The Congress recommended that “ALA, in cooperation with Library Support Staff

*Interest Round Table and other appropriate stakeholders, should study the feasibility of developing a voluntary national support staff certification program administered by the ALA-APA.”*

To date, LSSCP has completed the following:

- Appointed an Advisory Committee to assist with the development of the program
- Developed 10 competency sets
- Developed an assessment model
- Developed policies and procedures

The definitions used in the program are included in Appendix A.

### **The Certification and Program Approval Process**

The first ALA-APA sponsored certification was the Certified Public Library Administrator Program (CPLA®). To prepare for that program and others, ALA-APA developed a Certification Manual to govern the establishment of future certification programs. The manual outlines the following basic requirements:

- The program be sponsored and approved by one or more ALA divisions
- The program be approved by the ALA-APA Certification Program Committee
- The program be presented for discussion to the ALA Council
- The program be approved by the ALA Executive Board.

Once approved, the program will be managed by ALA-APA. The ALA-APA Board of Directors will name a Certification Review Committee to govern the program.

The following is the revised timetable for the LSSCP:

January 09	Received input from ALA-APA Council
January – June 09	Seek approval from participating ALA Divisions
July 09	Seek approval from the ALA-APA Certification Program Committee
	Seek official approval from ALA Executive Board
August 09 – December 09	Pilot test LSSCP
January 1, 2010	Begin accepting applications for participation
Spring 2010	Market LSSCP, Develop support systems

### **Competencies**

From the beginning, LSSCP has been conceived as a competency-based program. The first task undertaken by the Project staff and the Advisory Committee (AC) was to develop competencies upon which the LSSCP could be based. In general, staff and the AC used the following considerations in developing the competency sets:

- Individual competencies should be organized in competency sets which represent major functions for support staff in a public and academic library
- Taken together, the competency sets contain the broad and basic skills and knowledge necessary for support staff work in a public or academic library
- The program recognizes that the competency sets will be aspirational for some candidates and basic or familiar for other candidates
- The competency sets represent responsibilities that may be held by library support staff in academic and public libraries
- The program recognizes that the competency sets represent responsibilities that may not be held by library support staff in specific libraries
- To receive certification, LSS should demonstrate achievement in multiple competencies so that they have a broad understanding of library work
- This basic approach begins the certification program and the AC expects that additional competencies may be developed later.
- Some competency sets are so important they are required, while other competency sets can be elective based on the candidate's interest.

- The program will remain flexible, responsive and transparent to best serve the audiences for which it is being offered.

By spring 2007, the AC completed a draft of the competency sets and sent the draft to 36,000 ALA members and other interested parties. Respondents were encouraged to rate the competencies within eleven competency sets and to send comments. The survey received approximately 3,000 responses with approximately equal representation from academic and public librarians and LSS. Following the survey, the AC and project staff reviewed the comments and survey results, revised individual competencies and reduced the competency sets to nine. At its June 2008 meeting, the AC recommended that all candidates must demonstrate achievement of three of the competency sets and must demonstrate achievements of three more sets from the remaining six electives. In the spring of 2009, the AC divided the Technical Services competency set into two parts, thus the LSSCP now has ten competency sets.

The three required competency sets:

1. Communication and Teamwork
2. Foundations of Library Service
3. Technology

The six elective competency sets, from which three need be chosen:

Access Services

4. Access Services
5. Adult Reader's Advisory Services
6. Cataloging and Classification
7. Collection Management
8. Reference and Adult Services
9. Supervision and Management
10. Youth Services

As of June 2008, RUSA, PLA, ALCTS, ASCLA and LAMA (now LLAMA) have approved the competencies. The Competency Sets are included in Appendix B.

### **Assessment Model**

The AC recommends two forms of assessment for demonstrating that candidates have achieved competency sets. The first will be a process for course approval. LSSCP candidates who successfully complete an approved course will have met that competency set. The second assessment method will allow the candidate to demonstrate achievements via submissions to an electronic portfolio system. This method lets candidates receive credit for a competency set by demonstrating past learning from job experience and from new learning from a variety of sources. Volunteer librarian experts will evaluate portfolios. The AC hopes the ALA Divisions and relevant committees will assist in recruiting evaluators who have expertise in the competency sets and that library school faculty will volunteer to be evaluators.

ALA Divisions may choose to submit courses for course approval and assist their members with participating in the portfolio process through workshops or other assistance. For a more detailed explanation of the assessment process, see Appendix C.

### **Policies and procedures**

LSSCP will be supported by policies and procedures that will govern the implementation and operation of the program. These policies and procedures cover eligibility, application, registration, fees and other aspects of program implementation. For a more detailed explanation of policies and procedures, see Appendix D.

### **Pilot testing**

The AC strongly believes that LSSCP should be pilot tested prior to full implementation. The tests are scheduled to begin in August 2009. The test sites are five different types of library organizations that are most likely to sponsor courses or assist LSSCP candidates in the portfolio process. The five organizations are the Louisiana State Library, the Texas Library Association, Highline Community College in Washington State, a the Lincoln Trail Libraries System and the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS), an ALA Division.

### **The Relationship between LSSCP and Library Technical Assistant Programs**

The LSSCP will not supplant the approximately 50 Library Technical Assistant (LTA) programs in community colleges which lead to certificates or associate degrees. The LSSCP will not offer courses but will instead identify education providers. LTA programs are important education providers for LSS. The AC hopes that LTA programs will apply for approval of courses that address a competency set. LTA programs could also assist their students and graduates to prepare and submit portfolios.

### **Business Plan**

A full business plan to support LSSCP has been developed. The plan covers the following: 1) governance and management; 2) operational requirements; 3) marketing; 4) projected participation over the first three years; and 5) a financial plan.

In summary, the LSSCP will be managed by ALA-APA with a projected staffing of 1.5 FTE. Based on a survey of potential applicants, the plan estimates that 300 LSS will apply to be candidates in each of the first three years. At an estimated fee of \$350 per candidate (to cover the cost of enrollment and subscription to an online portfolio program), the plan projects that there will be a slight net revenue. For a more detailed look at the business plan, see Appendix E.

### **The Advisory Committee (AC)**

This AC has representatives from the following:

- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)
- Association of Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS)
- Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA)
- Public Library Association (PLA)
- Reference and User Services Association (RUSA)
- Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA)
- Committee on Education (COE)
- Library Support Staff Interest Round Table (LSSIRT)
- Western Council of State Libraries (WCSL)

The AC meets three times a year. An electronic discussion group facilitates frequent online communication. The project staff develops project ideas and documents and shares them with the Advisory Committee for review and consensus. The members of the Advisory Committee are also expected to be the liaison to the ALA unit they represent.

**Appendix A**  
**Library Support Staff Certification Program**  
**Definitions**  
April 6, 2009

**Advisory Committee**

Representatives from the organizations and bodies that have committed to developing LSSCP: American Library Association (ALA), Western Council of State Libraries and several division and round tables of ALA. (For a full list of the Advisory Committee members, please go to [www.ala-apa/lsscp](http://www.ala-apa/lsscp).)

**Approved course**

A course that has been submitted to the LSSCP, using a standard form, through the Course Approval Process, and approved as fulfilling criteria for teaching a competency set. The process includes a description of the course content, the instructors, the method of instruction and method to assess learning. When a course is approved, an LSSCP candidate who completes the courses successfully need only submit proof of completion and will not have to submit a portfolio on that competency set. An approved course must teach an entire competency set.

A course may be a workshop or institute or other educational offering; be offered over several weeks or in a more condensed period; be online or in person or a combination of both; and be synchronous or asynchronous.

**Applicant**

A library support staff person who submits an application to become a candidate in the LSSCP program by completing the application form to determine eligibility.

**Candidate**

A library support staff person who meets all of the program's eligibility requirements and who is accepted in the program by the LSSCP Certification Review Committee

**Candidate Achievement Record (CAR)**

The candidate's online record that includes general contact information; all submissions and portfolios developed to meet competency sets; evidence of approved courses taken; and any other information the candidate wishes to include or which is requested by either the LSSCP Certification Review Committee (CRC) or the portfolio evaluators.

**Certification Program Committee (CPC)**

A committee appointed by the President of ALA who oversees the establishment of the LSSCP and other certification programs of ALA-APA.

**Certification Review Committee (CRC)**

A committee appointed by the President of ALA who will oversee the ongoing implementation of LSSCP once it has been approved.

**Competencies**

Skills and knowledge necessary for LSS job performance. LSSCP competencies are grouped into ten Competency Sets, based on typical public and academic library responsibilities. .

**Competency Set**

A group of related competencies developed to standardize expectations for academic and public library support staff; give education providers guidance for developing courses or training curriculum; and help employers articulate job requirements. They are sometimes referred to as competency areas. There are ten competency sets. Three are required and seven are electives.

An LSSCP candidate must achieve the three required competency sets and three more of the elective competency sets.

### **Competency Set – Elective Competencies**

The seven elective competencies are: Access Services, Administration and Supervision, Cataloguing and Classification, Collection Management, Reader's Advisory Services, Reference and Information Services, and Youth Services.

### **Competency Set – Required Competencies**

The three required competency sets are: Foundations of Library Service, Communication and Teamwork, and Technology.

### **Competency Set Achievement**

An LSSCP candidate achieves a competency set when the candidate meets all the requirements for that competency set. The candidate proves achievement by either submitting evidence of successful completion of an approved course or by receiving a positive assessment for a portfolio on a competency set from portfolio evaluators.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

Applicants must satisfy the following requirements to be accepted into the LSSCP program: previous work experience in any type of library for a minimum of 1820 hours within the last five years, and a high-school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) credential. Educational qualifications from other countries will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

### **LSS**

Library Support Staff, defined as anyone who works in a library and does not have a Master's Degree in Library Science.

### **LSSCP**

Library Support Staff Certification Program.

### **Portfolio**

An integrated set of documents organized by competency set which include: 1) reflective narratives identifying and articulating the candidate's knowledge and skills and 2) documents and artifacts providing evidence of the candidates' learning. The portfolio is online, hosted on a website that accepts electronic documents, e.g., those created, modified, or scanned to be read on a computer screen or printed from a computer. Candidates will upload, post, and/or submit documents to their secure and personalized portfolio website.

### **Portfolio Evaluators**

Library school educators and librarians with experience in the area of a competency set based on application to and selection by LSSCP Certification Review Committee. Portfolio evaluators must complete the portfolio assessment training.

### **Portfolio Evaluation Guidelines**

Criteria that are used to evaluate the information and documentation submitted in a portfolio. The evaluation guidelines are available to the candidates and used by the portfolio evaluators.

## **Appendix B Competencies**

### **Required Competencies:**

#### **FOUNDATIONS OF LIBRARY SERVICE COMPETENCIES (revised July 21, 2008)**

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.

##### **Library Support Staff will know:**

1. The mission and roles of a library in its community and the mission of libraries in general.
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.
3. The roles of Library Support Staff and other staff in libraries.
4. The responsibilities of and the relationships among library departments or functional areas.
5. Basic principles of:
  - reference and information services;
  - circulation, including interlibrary loan and collection maintenance;
  - current cataloging and classification systems
  - acquisitions and collection development.
6. How libraries are governed and funded and the place of libraries within organizations or government structures.
7. The value of cooperating with other libraries to enhance services.
8. The value of participating in professional development opportunities, including certification, continuing education, staff development and professional associations.

##### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

9. Practice quality customer service.
10. Communicate and promote the library's values and services to staff, volunteers, users and the community.
11. Recognize and respond to diversity in user needs and preferences for resources and services.

#### **COMMUNICATION AND TEAM WORK COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)**

Library Support Staff need to communicate effectively with library users, library staff and others in a variety of situations to offer high-quality customer service. Library Support Staff are also required to make decisions that impact library services and serve as valued members of work teams. This set is divided into two parts: communication and team work; and decision-making.

##### **COMMUNICATION COMPETENCIES**

##### **Library Support Staff will know:**

1. Basic concepts of interpersonal relations, customer service and communication.
2. The importance of upholding policies and decisions and when to make exceptions.
3. Tools for resolving conflict.

##### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

4. Treat others with respect, fairness and consistency.
5. Seek, give and accept constructive feedback from coworkers, supervisors and users.
6. Resolve conflict in a positive and productive manner and judge when situations should be referred to a supervisor.
7. Select the most appropriate and effective medium and techniques for communicating.

8. Consider the language, communication styles and needs of diverse users when responding to or initiating communication.
9. Write clearly, logically and concisely.
10. Listen effectively and transmit information accurately and understandably.
11. Identify the critical issues to be communicated in complex situations.
12. Use appropriate strategies to deliver difficult or sensitive information.
13. Use approachable and welcoming behavior with all users.
14. Anticipate and maintain awareness of users' needs and wants in order to provide or improve services.

#### **TEAM WORK AND DECISION-MAKING**

##### **Library Support Staff will know:**

15. Basic concepts of team work.
16. Basic concepts of effective decision-making.

##### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

17. Participate effectively on teams and in groups and commit to meeting agreed-upon goals and objectives.
18. Promote communication and respect among team members.
19. Provide timely, accurate and candid information to supervisors and peers and identify to whom critical issues should be communicated.
20. Gather the best available information to support decisions.
21. Participate with others in collegial decision-making and problem solving and support the decisions of the team.
22. Communicate information or data in an understandable format.

#### **TECHNOLOGY COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)**

These competencies address the skills and knowledge about technology necessary for library work. This competency set also addresses the role of providing access to and educating the user in the use of technologies and equipment relevant to information seeking, access and use.

##### **Library Support Staff will know:**

1. General trends and developments of appropriate technology in all library functions and services whether offered in the library or through remote access.
2. Technology's role in creating, retrieving and delivering library resources, function and services.
3. The role and responsibility of libraries for introducing relevant applications of technology to the public, including assistive technology.
4. Basic computer operations needed to access library applications software and productivity tools.
5. Basic networking technologies and protocols.
6. Basic data security principles and best practices to ensure the integrity of data and the confidentiality of user activities.
7. Concepts and issues concerning the appropriate use of technology by different user groups.

##### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

8. Adapt to changes in technology.
9. Transfer information gained from training into the work place.
10. Assist and train users to operate public equipment, connect to the internet, utilize library software applications and access library services from remote locations.
11. Use information discovery tools including the library's catalog, core library databases and internet search engines.
12. Perform basic troubleshooting of technical problems and resolve or appropriately refer those problems.

13. Access and use basic assistive technologies, where appropriate, to ensure that all users have equitable access to technology.

### **Elective Competencies:**

#### **ACCESS SERVICES COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)**

Access Services include on-site use and the routine circulation of resources in all formats, special circulation of course-reserve or other restricted-use materials, on-site and remote reciprocal circulation with users of partner libraries, interlibrary loan and document delivery.

##### **Library Support Staff will know:**

1. Classification and organization schemes for collections.
2. Processes for circulating library materials.
3. Basic characteristics of systems supporting circulation and interlibrary loan.
4. Copyright issues pertaining to access functions such as reserves, document delivery and interlibrary loan.
5. Principles, policies and procedures regarding user privacy in library services.
6. Policies and procedures for resource sharing among libraries.
7. Principles of security for people, equipment and collections

##### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

8. Propose and explain library policies and procedures regarding access services.
9. Provide quality customer service to library users.
10. Manage people with diverse needs, diverse situations and emergencies.
11. Perform applicable financial transactions and record keeping.
12. Maintain collections by shelving, shifting and shelf reading.
13. Assist with identifying materials for preservation and/or replacement.
14. Manage appropriate technologies and equipment for resource sharing, reserves and user services.
15. Troubleshoot and solve problems related to circulation and resource sharing processes.
16. Assist with collecting and reporting data on collections and services.

#### **ADULT READER'S ADVISORY COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)**

In recent years, Reader's Advisory services have expanded from assisting library users with identifying books to read to assisting users with identifying materials for viewing and listening. These services consist of recommending titles of potential interest to the user to match the user's interests and experience as well as promoting the collection.

##### **Library Support Staff will know:**

1. The library's collection and where to locate materials by type and genre.
2. A general familiarity with popular and classic fiction, including a knowledge of authors, various fiction genres and popular, current non-fiction.
3. A general familiarity with popular and classical music, including a general knowledge of performers and composers.
4. A general familiarity with variety of films, including a general knowledge of directors and actors in different film and media genres.
5. Online and print readers' advisory tools and reviewing sources.
6. Formats appropriate for persons with disabilities affecting vision, hearing or understanding.

##### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

7. Use online and print readers' advisory tools and reviewing sources.
8. Briefly and succinctly, describe the plot of a book, film or other media and its appeal.

9. Determine users' interests and make connections between their interests and similar works.
10. Make recommendations without judgment regarding reading, listening or viewing preferences.
11. Select materials from the library collections in response to users' inquiries.
12. Assist users with finding specific titles in their preferred format.
13. Assist in developing, promoting and implementing programs based on the library collections, such as book discussions, summer reading programs, film and media programs.
14. Assist in compiling resource lists and displays of books, recordings, films and media by genre, historical period, subject or author, composer or director.
15. Suggest additions to the collection based on trends in materials requested and borrowed.

### **CATALOGING AND CLASSIFICATION (revised March 25, 2009)**

Library Support Staff who work in cataloging and classification support library users access resources in a library. They do this by assisting with the processes that enable multiple ways of searching to identify what is in a library; to identify particular items; and to locate these items in the library or in other libraries. Cataloging and classification work requires knowledge of standard systems of classification, cataloging and subject headings. This work also requires the ability to apply these standards to diverse types of materials.

#### **Library Support Staff will know:**

1. The functionality of integrated library systems.
2. Basic tools, both print and online, for cataloging.
3. The basics of MARC format and cataloging rules.
4. The basics of classification and organization schemes for collections.
5. The basics of subject headings.
6. The value of cooperating with other libraries to enhance services.

#### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

7. Use bibliographic utilities.
8. Use the cataloging functions of integrated library systems.
9. Perform basic copy cataloging, including reviewing and editing cataloging records.
10. Explain the library's classification scheme to others and assist others to find desired resources.

### **COLLECTION MANAGEMENT (revised March 25, 2009)**

Library Support Staff who work in collection management support coworkers and library users by assisting with the processes that put library materials on the shelf or online. Collection management work requires knowledge and abilities in many aspects of this fundamental library work, including understanding publishers, vendors, budgets and accounting, how to resolve problems, preparing items for use and caring for items after they have been well used.

#### **Library Support Staff will know:**

1. The functionality of integrated library systems.  
The general purpose of collection management in libraries.
2. The basic principles of selecting and discarding of all types of library materials.
3. Basic principles for ordering, processing and claiming all types of library materials.
4. Basic organization of the publishing industry and familiarity with vendors of materials,
5. supplies, equipment and services.  
The value of cooperating with other libraries to enhance services.
6. Basic principles for preserving all types of library materials.

**Library Support Staff will be able to:**

7. Use standard sources to assist with collection development and procurement.
8. Apply effective procedures for verifying, ordering and receiving orders; resolving problems; and accounting for expenditures.
9. Apply appropriate methods and techniques for accurate preparation of all library materials
10. Maintain the collection using standard preservation techniques.
11. Use standard methods for material rebinding and storage.
12. Assist with decisions regarding weeding, material retention and replacement.
13. Explain and apply the library policy for accepting gifts of materials.

**REFERENCE AND INFORMATION SERVICES COMPETENCIES (revised June 19, 2008)**

These services support library users as they seek access to information in all formats, wherever these resources are located. These competencies require an understanding of basic information resources and of the user's information seeking behavior and expectations.

**Library Support Staff will know:**

1. The general scope of the library's collections including areas of strength and specialized collections.
2. Legal issues involved in reference services, including user privacy, confidentiality and copyright.
3. Basic reference, information and community resources.
4. Classification and organization schemes for collections.
5. Basic search methods, display options and terminology of the library's catalog, website and other information access tools

**Library Support Staff will be able to:**

6. Conduct effective reference interviews, helping users define their information needs.
7. Judge when referrals are necessary and use appropriate referral procedures.
8. Instruct users in basic research procedures, including use of the library's catalog, general database and web searching and locating materials in the library.
9. Use basic searching skills to find information in print, non-print and digital resources.
10. Use locally developed tools such as subject guides, FAQs and other resources that provide guidance to answer information requests.
11. Help users select the most appropriate information resource to meet their needs and evaluate the quality, currency and authority of information retrieved.
12. Identify and locate information in all formats and assist users in retrieving materials, including those not held locally.
13. Interpret bibliographic record and citation formats.

**SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES (revised June 18, 2008)**

Library Support Staff often hold positions that involve supervision and management. These staff members may also need to demonstrate the competencies specific to a department in which they work.

**SUPERVISION COMPETENCIES**

**Library Support Staff will know:**

1. Basic regulations and laws that govern employment; library policies and procedures; and how policies are influenced by local, state and federal laws and regulations.
2. Principles of staff management, supervision and discipline.

**Library Support Staff will be able to:**

3. Participate in recruiting, hiring, training, evaluating and promoting library staff.

4. Set clear performance expectations linked to the library's strategies and priorities
5. Demonstrate leadership in a team environment.
6. Plan, implement and encourage participation in staff development activities.

#### **MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES**

##### **Library Support Staff will know:**

7. The value of written, approved policies and the difference between policies and procedures.
8. The basic purposes and concepts of budgeting, grant writing and fundraising.
9. The value of planning library services based on community demographics and needs and evaluating these services.
10. Principles and the value of cooperation and collaborating with other libraries, agencies and organizations.
11. Principles of marketing the library and its services.

##### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

12. Develop realistic goals and measurable objectives after careful consideration of benefits, risks and impact on library current and future needs.
13. Develop, implement and evaluate recommendations for new services and programs based on analysis and interpretation of data about various aspects of library operations.
14. Review existing and develop new policies and procedures.
15. Develop and implement a marketing plan for the library and evaluate its effectiveness.
16. Build positive relationships between staff and users, applying concepts of user-oriented customer service.
17. Demonstrate the ability and willingness to uphold policies and decisions and know when exceptions are appropriate.
18. Use appropriate strategies to deliver difficult or sensitive information.
19. Identify community and user demographics and assist in planning library services on those demographics and needs.
20. Request, defend and follow a budget for library activities.
21. Conduct meetings effectively and efficiently.

#### **YOUTH SERVICES COMPETENCIES (revised June 19, 2008)**

These competencies are for support staff working in a public library in service to youth, from birth through age seventeen. Services to youth include collection development, programming, providing Readers Advisory and Reference services and teaching information literacy skills and related activities.

##### **Library Support Staff will know:**

1. A general understanding of the stages of childhood and adolescent development and factors contributing to the development of early literacy skills.
2. Resources for youth in different formats, including award-winners, classic titles and age-appropriate materials.
3. How to select appropriate materials for a particular youth, based on such factors as reading level, interest and level of maturity.
4. Appropriate internet sites, rules for safe navigation and use of online search tools and other technological applications for youth.
5. Legal and other issues affecting youth.

##### **Library Support Staff will be able to:**

6. Establish a welcoming atmosphere and actively encourage youth participation in library programs and in the use of resources.
7. Demonstrate written and oral communication skills for working with youth, their parents and other caregivers, other library staff and the personnel of agencies serving youth.
8. Assist with selecting appropriate materials for a youth collection.

9. Assist with planning, presenting and evaluating library programs that will attract youth.
10. Assist with advocating for and publicizing youth services.
11. Work cooperatively with personnel in schools and other community agencies serving youth.
12. Conduct effective reference and readers advisory interviews for youth and their parents and other caregivers and refer to a librarian when appropriate.
13. Assist with developing and marketing services for youth and their parents and other caregivers.
14. Instruct youth in the use of library materials, resources and equipment.
15. Manage youth problem behavior and emergency situations.
16. Follow policies and procedures related to challenged resources.

## **Appendix C**

### **Recommendations on Assessment of Learning in the LSSCP**

#### **1. National Standardized Testing**

Do not adopt national testing at this stage of the planning. The projected cost to develop national testing program is not included in the current grant. Investigate the total cost of national test development and implementation during this grant cycle and, if a decision is made to pursue national testing, include in a second grant application to IMLS.

#### **2. Methods of Assessment**

Two methods will be used for assessment: a portfolio submission process and a process for approving courses in competency sets.

##### **A. Portfolio**

A portfolio is an integrated set of documents that includes 1) one or more reflective narratives identifying and articulating the knowledge and skills gained and 2) documents and artifacts providing evidence of the learning.

Portfolios may include evidence of the following:

- Prior learning gained through past work experience, in which case evidence must be submitted substantiating the experience through which the learning was achieved.
- New learning acquired through taking courses, self-directed study, special projects or new on-the-job training and experience.
- A combination of prior learning and new learning.

All competency areas may be achieved through the portfolio method.

##### **B. Approved Courses**

Providers who offer courses and other educational opportunities in specific competency sets may apply to have a course or courses reviewed and designated as approved courses for specific competency sets. The approval process will be rigorous, requiring a clear indication of the curriculum, instructor qualifications and the assessment method used to evaluate the learning of the LSSCP candidates. Approval will be for a specific course that meets a complete competency set rather than one that addresses selected individual competencies. The approved course and their providers will be listed on the LSSCP website – [www.ala-apa.org/lsscp](http://www.ala-apa.org/lsscp). Providers may include library schools, Library Technical Assistant programs, state libraries, state library associations, regional library cooperatives, ALA Divisions, private organizations that provide continuing educational opportunities or consultants.

When a candidate successfully completes an approved course, official evidence of that successful will be required, to be submitted by the candidate on an official form provided by LSSCP.

Each of these providers may also offer a course that covers competencies or a competency set without the course being a designated an approved course. They may also assist candidates with preparation of portfolios for submission relating to a competency set. If the candidate takes a particular course that has not been approved,

the candidate will submit a portfolio as evidence that she or he has successfully met that competency set.

### **3. The Candidate Achievement Record (CAR)**

The Candidate Achievement Record will be a comprehensive electronic record of the candidate's application, work experience and achievement of the LSSCP competency sets. An online commercial electronic portfolio company will provide the software and structure for the LSSCP Achievement Record. Subscription costs for this service will be included in the application fee to become an LSSCP candidate.

Whether a candidate chooses to demonstrate achievement of a competency set through a portfolio or through successful completion of an approved course, the candidate will be responsible for adding the portfolio OR the evidence of successful completion of an approved course to the Achievement Record. Candidates can allow potential employers, graduate schools or anybody else to access the LSSCP Achievement Record to demonstrate their competence and performance. Each candidate will control access to his/her own Achievement Record.

### **4. Portfolio Review**

Reviewers selected and trained by the LSSCP Certification Review Committee (CRC) will review portfolios for evidence of achievement of a specific competency set when a candidate requests a review. Training will be provided on a regular basis at ALA Annual Conference or Midwinter Meeting as needed for portfolio evaluators. At the start of the program, reviewers may be the CRC; however, as more LSS apply for certification, the demand for portfolio review may be more than the 5-member CRC can manage. Also, depending on who is on the CRC at any point in time, specialists in specific competency sets may have to be recruited sooner. For example, if no CRC member has a technology or youth services background, CRC may recruit other reviewers so that portfolios can be appropriately evaluated.

CRC may ask division members to apply to review portfolios in their area of expertise after training. As the program grows, a database will allow ALA-APA to track reviewers, their contact information, their expertise, the number of times they have reviewed (or are willing to review) portfolios and their performance as reviewers.

An online portfolio manual will be available for both LSSCP candidates and for portfolio reviewers. The manual will include all of the information necessary to submit and review portfolios, including a description of the content expected in a portfolio and evaluation guidelines for assessing portfolios. Candidates are responsible for finding equipment and software to digitize or scan any documents that they may need to be uploaded to the online portfolio website.

Two reviewers will evaluate each portfolio. To increase validity, reliability and fairness, the two reviewers would be unknown to each other and would not have access to the other reviewer's assessment until after both assessments are done. The review could have one of several outcomes:

- A. Both reviewers agree that the candidate has successfully achieved the competency set and the candidate's application is complete for that specific area.
- B. Both reviewers agree that the candidate does not meet the competencies in the competency set. Via the CRC chair or ALA-APA staff, the reviewers may ask the candidate to revise portions of the portfolio and/or to submit additional material. They may also recommend that the candidate take an approved course in this competency set

- either from an approved provider (in which case the provider's assessment would be accepted) or by a non-approved provider (in which case the candidate would be asked to resubmit a portfolio at a later date.) If additional work is submitted at the reviewers' request, the reviewers will re-evaluate the portfolio, and the reviewers may either approve the portfolio or the reviewers may recommend that the candidate take a course as above.
- C. If the reviewers' assessments are not in agreement, CRC will ask a third reviewer to assess the portfolio with either option "A" or "B" as the outcome.

## 5. Evaluation

Once a competency set is completed successfully, through either evaluation of a portfolio or through evidence of successful completion of an approved course, the evaluation is considered final and complete for that competency set.

## 6. Requirements for Completion of Competency Sets

LSSCP participants may submit their work for a specific competency set when they have completed the work. The CRC will review portfolios on a regular basis and candidates will indicate when they would like a competency set to be reviewed. Individual competency sets will be assessed following their submission, and there will be no required order of submission. When the three required competency sets and the three elective areas have successfully been met, certification will be awarded.

### Three required competency areas:

- Foundations of Library Service
- Technology
- Communication and Teamwork

### Three additional competency areas must be achieved from these six areas:

- Access Services
- Cataloguing and Classification
- Collection Management
- Supervision and Management
- Adult Reader's Advisory
- Reference and Information Services
- Youth Services

## 7. Assessment Manual

A comprehensive Assessment Manual would be available online (for free) and in print (for a fee). The Assessment Manual will contain guidelines for the Achievement Record, for portfolios and for the use of approved providers, as well as guidelines for the application process to become an approved provider. More specifically, the Assessment Manual will include:

- A. Overview of assessment process
- B. Guidelines for using and maintaining the Candidate Achievement Record
- C. Portfolio guidelines
  - 1) Definition of a portfolio
  - 2) List of required contents in a portfolio

- 3) Link to the online portfolio manual and tutorial.
  - 4) How to submit documents to the electronic portfolio. (Except in **unique** circumstances, no physical documents should be submitted to any reviewer or to the ALA-APA office. All portfolio documents will be online.)
  - 5) Review process for portfolios
    - Reviewers
      - Division members
      - Library school faculty
      - Librarians with expertise in competency sets
    - Role of ALA-APA committees
    - Training of evaluators
    - Evaluation guidelines (both in this document and in a separate training manual for reviewers)
    - Appeal process
- D. How to access the list of approved courses from approved providers, including how to find an online guide to current course offerings. The online guide will include the following for each course:
- 1) Competency set
  - 2) Location (if not online)
  - 3) Cost
  - 4) When course offered
  - 5) Course delivery method
  - 6) Course description
  - 7) Other logistical details
- E. Method to apply for course approval (also available in a separate document)
- 1) Application process and fees
  - 2) Approval process
  - 3) Criteria for evaluation
  - 4) Approval duration/cycle
  - 5) Appeal process

A complete listing of all competency sets and their individual competencies, and Portfolio Development Suggestions for each competency set which gives concrete examples of how candidates may demonstrate their mastery of each competency when they choose to use the portfolio method.

## **Appendix D Policies and Procedures**

### **Candidate Eligibility Requirements**

To participate in the LSSCP, library support staff applicants must have a total of 1,820 hours of library experience, paid or unpaid, within the last five years in any type of library. Applicants must have a high school diploma or its equivalent. Applications from LSS whose education is outside the US will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Length of Program**

The Advisory Committee recommends that LSSCP candidates have a maximum of four years to complete the six competency sets.

### **Fees for LSSCP Application and Candidacy**

The cost for enrolling in the LSSCP is tentatively set at \$350 (\$325 for ALA members), paid upon application to be accepted as a candidate. This includes the cost of a five year subscription to an electronic achievement record system that will house portfolios and other documents. It does not include any costs associated with individual courses that the candidate might take.

The costs for course approval are tentatively set as follows:

Course One                    \$100

Course Two                    \$100

Courses Three to Ten (from same provider) \$50 each

Course providers must submit their course for approval every three years. The guidelines for the process have not yet been determined.

### **Renewal**

Certificate holders must renew their certificate every five years. The guidelines for renewal have not been determined yet.

## **Appendix E Business Plan Executive Summary**

### ***Introduction***

The Library Support Staff Certification Program (LSSCP) is a program of the American Library Association, and will be managed by the American Library Association-Allied Professional Association (ALA-APA). Development of the LSSCP was funded through a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) with significant matching contributions from the American Library Association (ALA).

The certification program audience is the approximately 120,000 workers employed in library support staff positions in public and academic libraries in the United States. This plan will describe the program's management, its audience, marketing plans, and the financial requirements for the first three years.

### ***Governance and Management***

Following approval by the ALA Executive Board, LSSCP will be managed by the ALA-APA. ALA-APA is a 501(c)6 nonprofit organization chartered in Illinois for promoting the mutual professional interests of librarians and other library workers. The ALA-APA is a companion organization to the ALA, which is an educational association chartered in Massachusetts to promote library service and librarianship.

In June 2001, the ALA Council established the ALA-APA to enable the certification of individuals in specializations beyond the initial professional degree. In January 2002, the scope of the ALA-APA was broadened to include advocacy for the mutual professional interests of librarians and other library workers.

Although ALA and ALA-APA are separate, independent legal organizations, they are tied together by fully interlocked governing bodies. The governing body of the ALA-APA is the ALA-APA Council, whose members are those individuals concurrently serving on the ALA Council. The ALA-APA Board of Directors manages the ALA-APA; this Board's members are those individuals concurrently serving on the ALA Executive Board.

The ALA-APA provides services to librarians and other library workers in two primary areas:

- Certification of individuals in specializations beyond the initial professional degree. ALA-APA offers the Certified Public Library Administrator (CPLA) program, which is a voluntary post-MLS certification program for public librarians with at least three years of supervisory experience.
- Direct support of comparable worth and pay equity initiatives as well as other activities designed to improve the salaries and status of librarians and other library workers.

#### **LSSCP Certification Review Committee:**

According to ALA-APA policies, the ALA-APA Board of Directors appoints a standing Certification Review Committee (CRC) for each certification program to exist for the life of that program. The purposes of a CRC are to oversee the development and administration of a validated method of measuring competence, based on the standards or competencies that are determined by the ALA units that developed the certification program; and to establish an appeals process for the specific program.

The LSSCP Certification Review Committee (LSSCP CRC) will consist of five members: two library support staff members; one each from a public and academic library; two librarians, one each from a public and academic library; and one library educator, from a Library Technical Assistant Program. Committee membership may be expanded or require additional appointments of working groups depending on the assessment model and effort required to review portfolios and providers.

### **LSSCP Management:**

The Director of the ALA-APA will oversee the day-to-day management of the LSSCP and make regular reports to the LSSCP CRC. A Program Officer will oversee the day-to-day operations of the program, eventually assisted by a part-time Program Assistant, when net revenues can accommodate new staff.

### ***Operations Plan***

A grant from IMLS that ends in June 2010 funds program development. With the approval of the ALA, program staff members plan to submit another grant application to IMLS for the purposes of launching a marketing program; adding competency sets in specialty areas, such as preservation or young adult services; and performing evaluative studies regarding the benefits of certification to library employees, libraries, and library services. Because continued federal funding is uncertain, the operations plan includes no outside funding. The following is a condensed version of the current project's detailed timeline.

Current to June 2010	Program Development
2009	Field Tests begin Portfolio software selected Portfolio evaluators trained Marketing campaign launched
December 2009	IMLS grant proposal due
January 2010	Candidates accepted Program Officer hired Portfolio evaluator training continues Marketing continues

### **Operation Requirements**

Location and Space Requirements: The ALA-APA office is located in the ALA Headquarters at 50 East Huron in Chicago, Illinois.

Equipment & Software: A computer will be leased for the Program Officer. Existing hardware and software appear to be adequate for normal office operations. Licenses or subscriptions will be required for online portfolio management and certification management software.

Furniture & Supplies: The Program Officer will require office furniture. The program will require filing cabinets, stationery, and promotional materials.

Communication: The program will require telephone, postage, and other communication costs.

Travel: The LSSCP will require some travel expenses to market the program.

Labor Requirements: The program will require one full-time Program Officer (PO), and eventually one half-time Program Assistant (PA). The PO's responsibilities will include:

- Provide reports to ALA-APA Director
- Staff liaison to the LSSCP CRC
- Communicate with candidates, providers and others
- Answer complex questions
- Train evaluators and oversee the portfolio assessment process
- Oversee the course approval process
- Promote the program
- Create content for the LSSCP website
- Make presentations and provide other publicity about the program
- Oversee the program financials
- Prepare annual budgets
- Assist in evaluation of the program

The PA's duties will include (The PO will share these duties with other ALA-APA staff until a PA is hired):

- Track and monitor candidates' progress and renewal cycles
- Track and monitor applications from providers for course approval
- Prepare correspondence to candidates, providers and others
- Answer basic program questions
- Monitor, maintain, and manage the website
- Perform simple budgetary tasks, such as reimbursements
- Provide clerical assistance
- Handle all logistics for meetings of the CRC and evaluator training

### ***Marketing Plan***

#### **Target Markets:**

The market consists of three groups -- library support staff, their supervisors (including library directors), and course providers. This plan considers its LSS audience to be a portion of the 121,000 workers who, according to the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, hold the occupational title, Library Technicians. Approximately 86,087 of these Library Technicians work in public, college and academic libraries, including junior colleges. The Bureau projects an eight percent growth rate in this job classification, adding another 6,887 positions by 2016.

Library support staff hold a variety of titles and classifications. Libraries do not use standard classification titles to distinguish between and define clerks, assistants, associates, managers, and library technicians. The program staff know that applicants will hold myriad of titles and responsibilities.

The supervisors of LSS are the second target market of the LSSCP. Like LSS, this group holds a variety of titles and classifications. Indeed, some LSS are supervisors themselves. It is difficult to estimate precisely the number of LSS supervisors in public and academic libraries.

Course providers, the third audience, will be ALA units, state library associations, Library Technical Assistant programs, Library and Information Science programs, library consortia, library systems, state libraries, independent trainers, vendors, and for-profit providers.

**Target Market Research:** In November 2008, program staff sent a survey to 1,829 library support staff and received 565 responses. The purpose of this survey was to ascertain a reasonable prediction of LSS participants in the LSSCP and to identify incentives and barriers to their participation. Many of the LSS survey's findings drive the current business plan.

Program staff also surveyed potential course providers in February 2009. The results of this survey also inform this plan.

The program staff will regularly solicit information from candidates to help plan subsequent marketing endeavors. For example, staff will collect data about how the candidates learned about the program. Using these answers, program staff can develop tailored marketing. Furthermore, because LSS participation in the program is closely tied to employer support, marketing efforts will be focused on illustrating the value of the certification program to employers.

**Target group motivation:** Library Support Staff: Of those who responded to the November 2008 survey, 410 LSS (72.6%) said that they are somewhat or very interested in LSSCP and identify the following as the most important motivators. This group was least likely to select motivators of promotions or pay increases.

- Learn more new things about the library field
- Recognize skills and education
- Provide better service to library users

Previous studies in individual states have shown that LSS supervisors and library directors will encourage and facilitate their employees to seek certification for many reasons, including the following:

- Improve job performance
- Provide goals for employees
- Improve services to the public
- Understand better how the library works
- Contribute more to the development of library programs and services

Course Providers: Of those 136 who responded to the February 2009 survey, many said they were interested in modifying existing courses, or asking for approval for existing courses, or developing new courses. The survey asked the reasons why respondents said that they were not apt to make application to be a course provider. The following is a summary of the most frequent objections by provider type.

The provider fees are \$100 for the first and second courses. If providers seek approval for more than two courses, the fee for the third to tenth course is \$50 per course. Course approval is for three years.

Library Technician Programs	Fee high, low benefits seen
4-year Colleges	Little interest or capacity
Library Schools	Low enrollment, benefits
State Libraries	Primarily fee too high; few staff
Coooperative Network	Primarily a staff issue; also fee too high and mission mis-match
Independent Consultants	Fee too high; too much work
ALA Units	No problems
State Assocations	No problems
Other	High fees, low benefits, few staff

Project staff will address these concerns in the marketing for the program. Staff will keep in mind that the motivation of the course providers is to increase enrollment in courses while reducing or maintaining current costs. Specifically program staff will:

- Develop clear application procedures

- Explain the fee structure in detail
- Focus on the benefits to the organizations that offer approved courses to LSSCP
- Focus on the benefits to the organization that can alter existing classes.
- Highlight the success of organizations that offer approved LSSCP classes.

### **Marketing strategies:**

Media: The goal for the first two years of the program (2007-2009) was its development and approval. Program staff estimate three more years will be required to build awareness of the program and motivate potential candidates to seek more information and enroll. Staff plan to send regular press releases through the ALA Public Information Office and Chapter Relations Office channels. These releases, articles, and advertisements will be placed in the ALA Library Support Staff Interests Round Table newsletter, issued quarterly. Staff will also provide press releases and articles to national and local LSS electronic discussion groups such as libsup-l, and in support staff electronic newsletters such as *Associates: The Electronic Library Support Staff Journal*.

ALA-APA will purchase quarterly ads in the Public Library Association journal, *Public Libraries*, and the Association of College and Research Libraries journals, *College and Research Libraries News* and *College and Research Libraries*, publications most likely read by LSS and their employers. Subscribers may have a greater interest in professional development and certification than non-subscribers. Therefore, ads in these journals allow the program to reach individuals already primed to be receptive. Annual costs for these ads are \$1050 for *Public Libraries* and \$2500 for the ACRL publications. Periodic advertising in the ALA-APA electronic monthly newsletter, *Library Worklife: HR E-News for Today's Leaders* will be free.

Public Appearances: The Director of the ALA-APA and the Program Officer will offer presentations at the ALA Annual Conference, as well as programs at the PLA and ACRL conferences. The Director and Program Officer will also pay special attention to securing program spots in conferences and meetings hosted by or focused on library support staff. For example, Illinois, Virginia, Colorado, and Washington have robust state associations that sponsor LSS conferences.

Publicity: The ALA-APA Director and Program Officer will use various opportunities to build awareness of the program. Specifically, in the first three years, program staff will, with permission, publish lists of certification recipients and quotes on the website and in ALA-APA's *Library Worklife* newsletter. With the permission of certificate holders, program staff will send award notices to employers and state libraries to encourage local recognition of LSS accomplishment.

In addition, program staff will seek testimonials from participants, and the endorsements of well-known LSS, including the *Library Journal's* Paraprofessional of the Year and authors of books about and for LSS. These testimonials and endorsements will be featured on the website and in collateral marketing material. Staff will also solicit a donated four-frame comic strip by Bill Barnes and Gene Ambaum, creators of "Unshelved," to use in promotion materials.

Staff will use program milestones, such as the first and one-hundredth person to be a Certified Library Support Staff (to be trademarked), to generate press releases highlighting the recipient and the program. Staff will seek industry funding for a kick-off reception at the 2010 Mid-Winter Meeting

Website: The current website at [www.ala-apa.org/lsscp](http://www.ala-apa.org/lsscp) works well for the project development stage in which the primary purpose is to communicate the program's various activities and outcomes. The website must be upgraded to function as an effective marketing tool and be an easy-to-use and secure tool for certificate candidates and course providers.

### ***Projections of Participation***

Candidates: In November 2008, program staff surveyed 1824 LSS who were members of ALA or the state library associations in Virginia and Wyoming. The survey received 565 respondents for a response rate of almost 31%. Survey results showed that 73% or 441 of those who responded were somewhat or very interested in participating in the LSSCP. Most of these respondents were had 11 or more years of experience in libraries.

The survey also asked those respondents who were somewhat or very interested in the LSSCP, when they would enroll in the LSSCP. Seventy percent or 291 of these respondents said that they would participate in the first year. Most of the rest of these respondents said that they did not know when they would participate.

The current recession is likely to influence the number of participants in the LSSCP. Survey results show that a significant number or 32% of those respondents who are somewhat or very interested in participation would do so without employer support, which is defined as financial assistance or release time to complete course work or the portfolio.

The survey's audience differed from the full LSS population in significant ways. First, the survey audience was those LSS who belong to their state or national library association. This group is likely to be more interested in larger library issues and be able to pay the fees for association membership. Program staff considers this group most likely to seek LSS certification, though staff will certainly make efforts to reach LSS who are not members of LSS associations.

We estimate that 5,250 LSS are members of state associations or ALA (based on rough estimate of 1,500 LSS ALA members and an average of 75 LSS members of 50 state associations or 3,250). If 74% of all LSS in this group are very or somewhat interested in the LSSCP, we can reasonably estimate that 3,995 LSS are interested in the LSSCP.

As stated above, the survey showed that 291 (51.5%) of respondents said that they would enroll in the program's first year. Using this percentage to estimate first-year participation in the larger group, we find that 2,704 LSS might enroll in the first year. However, this level of participation is unlikely for many reasons. First, libraries may not be able to provide support to LSS due to cutbacks. Second, potential candidates' enthusiasm for the program might wane because of the program's requirements. Furthermore, ALA-APA and the Western Council of State Libraries' experiences with new certification programs show that a high level of participation is unlikely in the first years of a new certification program. For these reasons, program staff predict that only the most ambitious and well-supported LSS will apply during the program's initial years.

Based on the survey results and current economic conditions, program staff project that 300 LSS will enroll in the program in each of first three years of the program. Because this program will address an unmet need, program staff anticipate a larger enrollment in the first few years before interest plateaus to a steady stream of applicants. Subsequent enrollment will depend on the success of marketing endeavors, word-of-mouth, and evidence to demonstrate the certifications value to all the target market groups: LSS, their employers, and course providers.

Certification programs typically take years to penetrate their markets to any significant degree and to break even financially. Professional development is attractive only to a subset of any profession for which it is not required. Limitations to attracting the entire universe of support staff exist because the program is voluntary and fee-based, and it is targeting a population that has many members who are difficult to reach with available media and contacts, geographically isolated and difficult to convince to participate without a compelling case. In addition, limitations will also remain to participation until states believe that LSSCP can supplement or replace their current certificate and certification requirements. LSSCP staff have been and will continue to track state requirements for professional development and continuing education for support staff.

LSS in those states, as well as the governing bodies managing state certifications, may consider LSSCP a venue for mandatory continuing education.

The program will be successful if, in a decade, information about the program reaches 30 percent of the entire support staff community (~35,000) and if our estimate of 4,000 interested LSS are active participants (candidates, graduates, renewals) in ten years.

Course Providers: This plan estimates that the LSSCP CRC will approve 20 courses in each of the first three years of the program. This estimate is based on the results of the February 2009 course provider survey, which found that 18 respondents are somewhat or very likely to apply in the first year; 28 in the second year; and 19 in the third year. Candidates can also take unapproved courses, but LSSCP believes that candidates will prefer to complete online approved courses because successful completion will meet the competency set requirements. Candidates who complete approved courses have little else to submit for their portfolios, while those taking unapproved courses must submit significant documentation.

### ***Financial Plan***

The operation of the LSSCP will be funded by fees from candidates and course providers. The candidate fees must be sensitive to the median salaries and expectations of LSS, while funding the fixed (staff compensation, supplies, telecommunications, and space) and variable (software, publicity, design, and website development) costs. The LSS survey asked respondents about the perception of a proposal \$350 fee, which includes the certification fee and subscription to the portfolio system. Forty percent of respondents thought that \$350 (\$325 for ALA members) was "about right." There were 51 respondents who provided comments on the proposed fee; many of these comments asked program planners to consider the relationship of the fee to the low salaries of LSS and to other certification or license costs. Others pointed to a lack of information about renewal requirements and how the renewal fee might affect their view of the fee.

As mentioned before, the survey of course providers revealed that resistance to the fees is lower than might be expected; over three-quarters of respondents thought the fee was perhaps too high, but would not prevent them from seeking approval.

A financial spreadsheet outlining the project costs and income for the first three-years of the LSSCP is attached to this plan. It is important to note that the cost of the portfolio software is estimated at \$75 per candidate. Therefore, these costs are not fixed and vary with the number of candidates. This financial projection shows a very small net revenue in each of the program years.

Please note that this plan's financial plan contains expenses for what the planners believe are the necessary resources for program implementation. The ALA Board of Directors that will approve the LSSCP and approve its budget will use this budget as a guide for their planning final budgets for LSSCP and ALA-APA.