

To: MSL Commission  
From: Karen Strege  
Re: Marketing and the state library  
Date: January 16, 2002

As you know from reading the draft strategic plan, marketing is an agency wide issue, which has three aspects for MSL. The first is the library community's request for MSL to coordinate statewide efforts to increase the visibility of libraries. The second is the community's request that we provide them with marketing training. The third is the need to market each state library department. In addition to the requests for marketing expressed through the planning process, Himmel and Wilson made numerous recommendations concerning the need of the agency to market library and agency services.

Although many staff members have public relations duties built into their position descriptions, MSL has no staff member assigned specifically to oversee writing and distributing of press releases; to identify news or feature worthy services or events; to manage a statewide marketing campaign; or to complete other functions related to public relations.

Program managers met and considered the following options to address the problem of marketing.

**Outsourcing the duties.** While outsourcing is appropriate for developing and implementing one-time statewide campaigns, managers recognize that outsourcing would require many staff hours to educate and oversee a contractor. Although initial education is required of a new staff member, because of everyday exposure to the agency and its employees he or she would have a great understanding of agency needs.

**Dispersing duties to existing staff.** Assigning new duties to current staff members is difficult for two reasons. One, no current staff member has the background or education to plan a campaign or engage in "every-day" public relations. Two, all staff members are currently very busy, with some having more work than they can accomplish in the hours available. Furthermore, managers worry that when faced with multiple projects and priorities, staff members will defer the marketing aspect of their duties.

**Hiring a part-time staff member.** Managers prefer this option because we believe that having an employee responsible for the everyday marketing and the campaign will give this issue the attention that it demands. We are aware of problems with this option. Although NRIS' funding is relatively stable, we would use core dollars to fund this position, meaning that we would use no contract funding. Core dollars are in high demand to fund other non-contract services.

Program 1's share of the position's funding will require the use of LSTA funds. Since 1996, the Commission has authorized LSTA funds to pay for four additional positions at the state library. These four positions are the two technology consultants and the Director and the technology manager for the Montana Library Network. I believe that these four positions have led to significant gains in library improvement

throughout the state. However, I am aware that using more LSTA funds in the agency means less available for other projects. I am also painfully aware that MSL is built upon federal funding and the state's economy does not offer much hope for a transition to state funds. However, such use of LSTA funds is authorized under the act and other states use LSTA funds for marketing efforts.

The policy issue involved for Program 1 may be somewhat mitigated by hiring a temporary employee. The advantages would be that we could evaluate the effectiveness of the position within one year and if we determine that the position is not effective, we merely let the employment lapse. The disadvantage to hiring a temporary employee is that one year is a short time for a part-time person to initiate and evaluate a statewide campaign and an agency specific marketing effort.

What follows is the details of such a position. I look forward to discussing this issue with you.

**Funding:** One-half each from NRIS and Program 1 for personnel costs. All Program 1 funds for statewide campaign costs. Total LSTA request is \$28,225.

Personnel Costs		Statewide campaign costs	
Salary	\$16,500	Campaign	\$15,000
Benefits	\$4,950	(Includes printing, distributing costs of materials)	
Equipment	\$2,000	Travel	\$1,500
Total	\$23,450 (half \$11,725)	Total	\$16,500

### **Information Coordinator**

**Montana citizens understand the importance of library services in Montana.**

- Coordinate a state wide campaign to market library services, including the development and distribution of promotion materials to libraries
- Design and implement a campaign evaluation plan
- Help design and implement a workshop about basic marketing skills for library staff and trustees

**Potential and current users of the agency understand MSL services and know about new products and services.**

- Develop target-specific presentation materials (from very general to detailed, and from conceptual to technical)
- Give presentations when appropriate
- Develop general agency information, such as brochures and posters.
- Develop news releases

- Identify and regularly contribute to appropriate publications/newsletters, highlighting new and improved services, products and resources of MSL
- Coordinate MSL participation in conferences and develop methods to maximize the benefit of conference participation
- Coordinate MSL participation in meetings