

Memo

To: Montana State Library Network Advisory Council

From: Sarah McHugh

Date: March 1, 2013

Re: Pilot, Project, Program Criteria

The following criteria will be used to assist the NAC in considering the FY13 LSTA Statewide Projects budget items in order to make its recommendations to the State Librarian and the Commission:

Definitions:

A Pilot is a one- time endeavor undertaken to learn about, test, plan for, and determine the scope of an LSTA funded effort. It requires one-time funding, use of existing staff temporarily or possibly hiring temporary staff for a defined period of time. A pilot should clearly identify benchmarks or other objectives to be met or tested. The time limit for a pilot will be determined during the initial recommendation process, after which time a pilot either concludes or moves to the status of a project.

A Project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product or service. Planning for staffing must be done initially by MSL and shared with the NAC. Need for the project and its feasibility must be determined by considering strategic objectives, the ability of the project to meet a current problem and its ability to create opportunities. How the project supports other ongoing work of MSL should also be determined. Duration of LSTA funding needs to be established initially, including any percentage of decline or increase over the length of the project. Part of the timeline for a project includes benchmarks to evaluate its status as a project versus a program, the ability of participating libraries to bear the full costs of the project and therefore removal of LSTA funding and the ability of MSL staff to continue to provide technical or contractual support if the project can be independently funded by participants.

A Program is a long term endeavor continued in order to provide a unique product or service considered essential to library development and a cornerstone to other statewide efforts. Funding is more secure, though not a given, and is based on adequate funding being available.

Overall criteria for use in making recommendations for the annual LSTA statewide project budget:

1. Why this effort and why now?
2. What are the strategic objectives?
3. Does the effort support ongoing work of MSL?
4. Can MSL meet the staffing need?
5. What are the measures for success?
6. What is the scope?
7. What should not be included?

8. What is the timeline?
9. What would sustainable funding and staffing look like?
10. What is the evaluation timeline and what evaluation benchmarks will be used?
11. What is the ability of the pilot or project to sustain itself without LSTA? Without MSL staff?
12. What goals/benchmarks must be met in order to continue?

Deadlines to highlight:

November NAC meeting: Evaluation of existing LSTA pilots/projects/programs

March NAC meeting: Identify each LSTA funded effort as a pilot, project or a program