

IMLS Library Statistics Working Group

POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW OF DATA ELEMENTS

Any changes to the existing data elements, additions of new data elements, or deletions of existing data elements should be undertaken only after careful consideration of:

- The burden placed on local public libraries and state libraries (That is, to what extent are data available or how feasible is it to collect the data);
- The extent to which policy formulation and analysis, and decision-making would be improved or enhanced;
- The effect on other data elements; and
- The extent to which integration with other data elements is possible.

The members of the IMLS Library Statistics Working Group will provide advice on:

1. Ongoing review and analysis of existing data elements to determine whether a particular data element needs to be changed or deleted;
2. Taking a proactive stance when responding to a compelling need for the addition of a data element;
3. Editing the definition and notes fields of the data elements to correct grammar or spelling errors, or to clarify meaning; and
4. Proposing that a data element be added, changed, or deleted.

DEVELOPMENT CYCLE

1. In June of each year IMLS will solicit additions, changes, and deletions to data elements.
2. Proposals received September 1 will receive top priority for further vetting.
3. The vetting package will:
 - Identify the proposed addition, change, or deletion;
 - Provide a clear rationale for the proposed action;
 - Identify unfamiliar methodologies for local libraries and SDCs;
 - Include sample definitions, methodology, and experience collecting the data element at the administrative level; and

- Provide new or revised definitions and notes, or a proposal to delete an existing definition.

4. Between September and December, IMLS and Census staff will review the proposals and raise any issues that should be addressed during the December Working Group meeting.

5. By 5 p.m. of the second full day of the December conference, SDC's attending the conference and those attending by proxy should provide their assessment of the proposals. Proposals that are recommended for further review by at least 40% of the participating SDCs will be referred to the IMLS Library Statistics Working Group, which will then consider the proposal during its December meeting. This meeting will be held at the conclusion of the conference. The Library Statistics Working Group will fully discuss the proposal and the issues related to methodology, training, and impact. These issues will include any problems raised by IMLS or Census staff.

6. February 1, IMLS will publish a Federal Register Notice for a 60-day public comment period. The purpose of this notice is to solicit public comments in support of, or in opposition to, any proposed change, addition, or deletion. A second Federal Register Notice will be published for public comment when IMLS submits the new proposed data collection request to the Office of Management and Budget.

During the same 60 day period, IMLS staff will send proposal review materials to the State Data Coordinators. The review period must last at least three weeks. Signatures on the package will be required from both the State Data Coordinator and the Chief Officer making their joint recommendation for acceptance or rejection of the proposal. The review packages will be returned to both IMLS and the state's mentor.

7. After two weeks, IMLS staff will notify members of the IMLS Library Statistics Working Group of those states that have NOT yet submitted their recommendations. Mentors will contact SDCs, and a COSLA representative will contact Chief Officers to urge submission of the ballot during the three-week vetting period.

8. IMLS will review the results of the recommendations with the members of the Library Statistics Working Group, and solicit their advice.

9. By April 15, IMLS will decide whether or not to act on the proposal.

10. By May 15, IMLS staff will submit the OMB final approval package.

11. In June, potential new and revised data elements will be addressed in the training plans for the next annual meeting of the State Data Coordinators. State Data Coordinators will alert local public libraries to the potential change, so that local data collection and reporting efforts can reflect the change. Questions about definitions and issues of interpretation will be referred to the working group and COSLA listserves.