

## North Suburban Library System

**M E M O R A N D U M**

TO: NSLS Board of Directors  
FROM: Sarah Long  
DATE: April 20, 2009  
RE: Approve Work Plan FY2010

I am pleased to present the NSLS draft work plan for FY 2009 – 2010. The arrangement is very similar to work plans from the past two years. Rather than classifying items under the NSLS strategic direction they are designed to address, we examined the current challenges both NSLS and our members are facing and designed activities to meet those challenges. Nevertheless, our four strategic directions (see attached) have become an inherent part of all of the work we do and you will find them well-represented in this document.

You will notice one key difference from other work plans. Rather than simply listing activities we hope to accomplish in the next fiscal year, the plan also demonstrates what we believe our members should be doing to ensure their future. The biggest challenge facing both NSLS and our members today is survival. In light of recent developments in the technology world, we believe that libraries need to change their archaic rules and structures in order to thrive in the future. As you will see in the plan, as we help our members pursue this goal, we are concentrating on four key areas:

- Community Presence
- Streamlining/Updating Work Processes
- Focus on Future Survival
- Collaboration

You won't find any mention of our day-to-day activities here, such as planning Professional Development activities, consulting with members, running a van delivery service, or any of the other things our staff does daily to keep the System running smoothly and efficiently.

You will also note that the goals in this plan are very ambitious and will require a lot of work. In terms of our budgetary resources for next fiscal year, this plan will require our staff to devote significant time and energy to ensure our success. Other budget categories strongly affected will be:

- Professional Development as we pursue online training and hire presenters for workshops
- NSLS website redesign as we change our site to model recent technology trends and to be as useful as possible to our members
- Marketing as we promote the work plan initiatives
- Hiring a consultant to conduct a needs assessment of our membership

### **NSLS Strategic Directions**

Strategic directions are general descriptions of a limited number of areas in which an organization will work. Strategic directions represent a focus for a period of time. The organization will do other necessary work, but strategic directions represent a commitment to concentrate on a few areas. Typically an organization chooses between four and six strategic directions and commits to working on them for up to three to five years.

The following four Strategic Directions flow out of the work we undertook at the strategic directions retreat in October 2002 and were approved by the NSLS Board of Directors at the April board meeting on April 28, 2003.

### **Life Long Learning**

Transition to life long learning as "strategic learning," embracing the individual, the organization, and the community as part of the learning process. Create new knowledge about library practice that can help all learners in the system be more effective. Help individual learners and their employers view learning as integral and intrinsic to practice. Offer a richness of experience in learning by:

- Responding quickly to new issues and trends
- Exploring new technologies
- Facilitating exchange between different types of libraries
- Bringing in outside experts

### **Telling Our Story/Public Relations and Marketing**

Create and find funding for a new approach to telling the story of the 21-century library and librarian. This initiative to be at least a year long and relative to libraries of all types. Employ measurement techniques to ascertain the degree to which this strategic direction is achieved. This to be a system leadership initiative utilizing the power of aggregating member libraries. For member library staff, foster a climate of "Market Thinking" so that staff think about and use the techniques of marketing in planning initiatives and in telling their stories.

### **New Models of Service**

Develop new models of service to enhance the System's entrepreneurial/leadership role and to ensure the future survival of all types of libraries. Model best practices by pursuing new business and funding models, looking at partnerships in new and different ways (including alliances with other library systems), developing a knowledge base to

take advantage of areas of expertise throughout the System and creating service models for diversity.

**Advocacy**

Foster a culture of advocacy to build a deep capability for communicating to policy makers and stakeholders, the value of academic, public, special and school libraries in the information age. Help library staff and trustees view advocacy as integral and intrinsic to library practice and accept advocacy as a more purposeful and focused priority within individual libraries. Develop skills in serving as effective spokespersons and being effective legislative advocates. Provide the information tools necessary to assist in successful advocacy efforts.