

COSLA CE NEEDS ASSESSMENT 2014

As part of COSLA's CE Connector Function, funded by IMLS and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, this needs assessment sought to identify common Continuing Education (CE) unmet needs for public libraries across the U.S. This will help state library agencies partner nationally on new CE programs – that we may jointly seek IMLS and other grant funding to design, develop and deliver.

July 3, 2014

Purpose of the Needs Assessment

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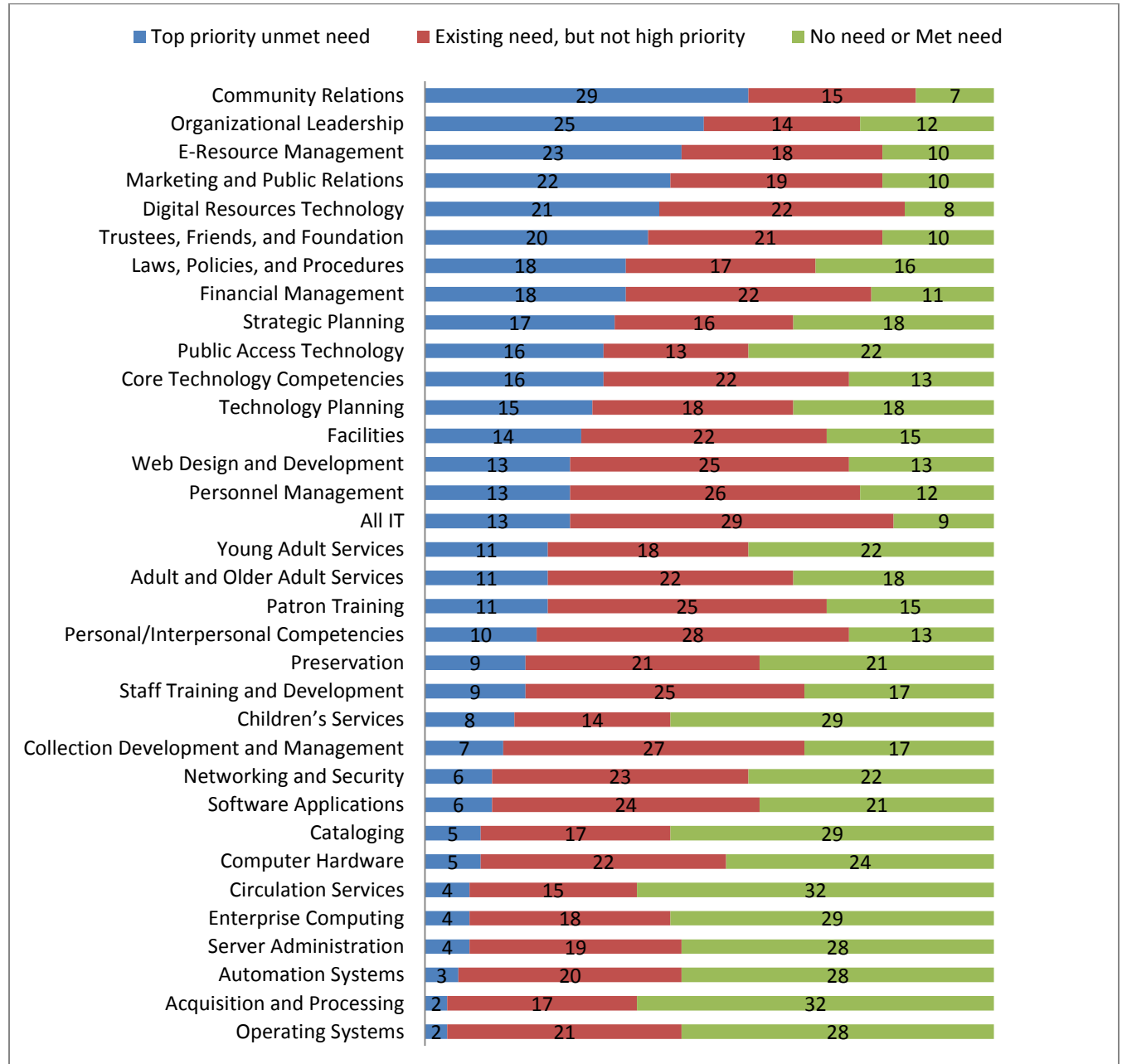
The project Coordinating Committee decided to use the recently updated [Competency Index for the Library Field](#) produced by WebJunction. Respondents were asked to this document as they responded to our survey -- it includes definitions of each competency category.

Each state library team was asked to work together to submit ONE survey response for their state, using their team's best judgment based on recent CE needs assessments, state library planning, and experience working with local libraries.

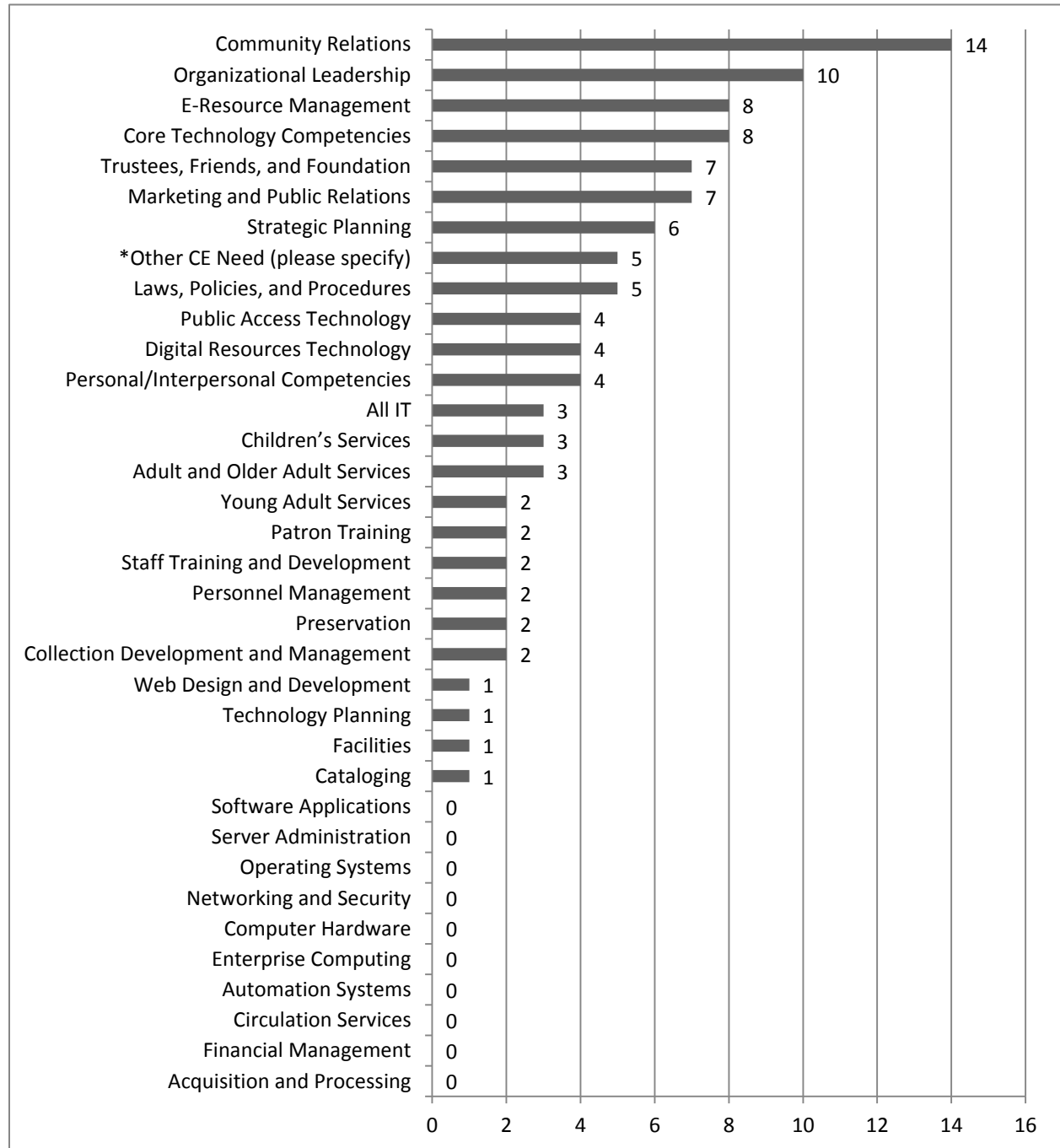
The needs assessment survey had a 100% response rate (51 respondents- one response for each state, as well as Washington DC).

Needs Assessment Results

1. What are the top Continuing Education unmet needs for public libraries in your state? The rows below contain each competency category from the Competency Index for the Library Field. For each category, please rate the level of need for new CE related to each competency: no need or met need, existing need, but not high priority, or high priority unmet need.



2. Please choose the TOP TWO priorities for CE for public libraries in your state. In other words, what are the two areas where your team would find significant value in a new CE program designed and developed through a state library partnership supported by COSLA? Please select only TWO options from the competency categories below.



***Other CE Needs:**

Planning & implementing small-scale digitization projects of historical materials and making them available and searchable on library website

Under Adult Services, the area where we feel there is a need for new CE is Adult Literacy.

All IT includes ALL things tech-related, including e-resources and digital literacy training

Curriculum geared toward libraries with fewer than 5 staff; leadership transitions/succession planning

Customer Service/Satisfaction

3. Please share below any other suggestions or comments that you want us to consider.

One of our public library systems mentioned the need for CE in "security".

NH has a variety of technology needs, but we are fortunate to have a few librarians with various levels of knowledge (low, moderate and high) concerning information technology who are willing to share with others on a small scale basis. It was somewhat difficult to match up our broad based needs with the core technology competencies as some were very simple (not needed) and some were too advanced (too technical) for our librarians. NH is 78% rural with many one-person libraries and consequently has a serious need for just about every IT competency. The State Library employs a fantastic Technology Resource Librarian who has successfully addressed the introductory and intermediate IT competencies pertaining to e-resources, automation systems, Internet searching, hardware, digital reading materials and social media.

With a CE department of one, we have trouble devoting the time needed to the activities of this group. However, we would like to utilize the professional staff from our nine regional libraries to participate.

The format best-suited for our audience is self-paced, self-guided training (over webinars, which can be problematic for our rural libraries). Thank you!

In question 2, we felt that except in the two categories we designated, we are able to find CE opportunities and make them available to staff of public libraries in Arizona for their areas of need. We do have to seek out those learning opportunities from varied sources and would be very happy to be part of collaborative efforts to pull together quality CE in the competencies on one platform with easy access.

Librarians are finding themselves in positions that require technological skills they may not have planned for. The "Accidental Cataloger" and "Accidental Systems/IT Librarian" are examples. They need to learn these hard skills on the job, often with little advanced notice.

RI looks forward to participating in national CE initiatives. As our survey answers show, we do not need a lot of support for library functions - we require MLS librarians in all our libraries by state standards - and our public library consortium (which all our public libraries belong to) takes care of hardware, technology, and various library support functions such as automation and cataloging. Technical training for digital strategies, especially new developments in computing, technology and media, is always welcome and popular in our libraries. Our biggest need though, is for high level planning and leadership development to ensure the future of our libraries.

*The other areas we considered as possible top two areas were: Community Relations
Personnel Management*

We are a small state of less than one million. Nearly 80% of our public libraries are in very rural communities of less than 2,000. Most of our librarians have never been a librarian and have no specific training. Our needs are to give to our librarians BASIC information that allows them to be up and running very quickly. Then to build upon that knowledge and the relationships we build with them. We are currently developing a Welcome packet for our many new librarians. As this develops, we would be happy to share this resource with the rest of the group. Currently we have some materials on our website <http://library.sd.gov> . We have titled it a "Fish out of Water." We have a very successful Public Library Training Institute, now in its 28th year. We use LSTA funds for much of this week's trainings and instructors. However, we increasingly have found it very difficult to find affordable online training to supplement throughout the year. Our current GREATEST need is a consistent, affordable online course selection of basics in library management. We had hoped that this could be supplied through WebJunction, but now are uncertain about its viability. We established a School Library Boot Camp for school librarians in 2012. This also has been wildly successful. However, any additional support we can give our school librarians would be welcomed. We are currently working with the one university in the state which is revamping its minor in school media leading toward a school media endorsement.

Smart devices and applications for library services is of high interest. We didn't know which category this should go into. Early learning is a high priority for Washington beginning with the governor. We assume this is part of children's services.

The common challenges expressed by staff development folks in our libraries - 1. Keeping up with technology including newer - mobile, tablets, ereaders, DIY tech, etc. and how it relates directly to library service 2. Customer service and working with various backgrounds like troubled teens, mental illness, homeless, various cultures/ languages. How to handle security, disaster, crisis management issues. Interpersonal skills to support good communication and customer service, but put in a library context. 3. Keeping up with the latest regarding working with various library user groups - children (example STEM, K-12 curriculum), teens, adults, older adults, and families (family engagement). What I think based on what our State Library Agency offers - 1. Leadership - We used to run a "Leading from Any Position" program but are no longer offering it. Can something be developed? 2. We need to strengthen/develop new skills with core groups of people in our state in order to

continue developing leadership that moves us forward. Skills like facilitation, coaching, organizational development skills to support strategic planning, meeting facilitation, soft skills training. Also, skills like design thinking, product development, user experience design, community needs assessment, community resource mapping, spatial literacy and data visualization. Lastly, thinking about how we connect library services both in-person and virtually to clearly offer and brand a transformational user experience in our libraries.

We also need a shared platform on which to house joint development or locally developed content of value to other states.

I met with Jamie Markus to craft our response. I feel that this survey is not particularly useful as it is like a laundry list - not targeted - and our needs vary a great deal by size of library, administrative structures, experience of directors and nature of state based services. The CE needs that are a priority for us are a result of hiring decisions at a local level. The two topics can be addressed by existing CE programs offered by myriad providers.

Take a hard look at how our library managers are being trained in graduate programs. Programs focus on theory and leadership/fiscal/personnel skills are expected to be learned on the job.

I would really love to see trustee training come from a collaboration with COSLA. Some state libraries do have good trustee training resources available online, but it would be great to have something comprehensive co-developed through COSLA that could be easily adapted based on individual state's needs.

Please ensure that training is scalable so that even small one-person libraries (greatest need) can benefit. Following a successful expansion in our state of digital services and access funded by BTOP, our libraries find themselves struggling to sustain and advance these gains in providing public access to computers, eResources, and the Internet. We believe a collaborative effort to support technology planning - including training - is much needed. Any effort, though, must be scalable: the needs of a small or one-person library will differ greatly from those of a larger library with IT staff. Training must be available anytime, anyplace - with chunked sections that librarians can choose from. A library degree may not be the starting point of our neediest learners, so at least some of the training must be very basic material free of jargon and usable for a learner uninitiated in the library field. Finally, training must be free, or affordable for SLA's to acquire statewide so that it remains free to library staff.

Many of the technology-related areas are handled centrally. Acquisition and Processing - Need to be done in a more centralized fashion so not sure a lot of CE will help. Cataloging - There are three counties in Delaware. Whenever a new cataloger is hired in one of the counties, someone from the county library meets with the new person and provides 1 on 1 training. Another county has centralized cataloging, and an administrative librarian from the DE Division of Libraries trains that person. We haven't had a new cataloger in the other county in years. New libraries - administrative librarian from DE Division of Libraries provides 1 on 1 training at the new site. Collection Development and Management - Need to

be done in a more centralized fashion so not sure a lot of CE will help. E-Resource Management - eResources need to be emphasized even though we do a lot of that centrally. Library staff need a lot of CE to enable them to help their customers. There seem to be a lot of staff who know very little about these. Databases need to go to federated search. Online resources need to be easier to use. Facilities - CE is not needed on how to plan/manage a major construction project, but CE is needed on how to make better use of existing space, particularly with advances in technology and the advent of makerspaces, and on facilities management, how to take care of your existing facility and all that entails. Trustees, Friends, and Foundation - CE for trustees and Friends is very important. Boards need to understand their role in library success.

Advocacy training would be our public libraries top choice because the was not an option we chose Marketing and Public Relations. Collection maintenance was our second choice so we chose Collection Development and Management. Missing from your choices but of interest to our libraries were handling change, new roles for public libraries, volunteers, security, evaluation and outreach.

North Dakota has many very small libraries with 1-2 employees so some of the competencies, such as Personnel Management, are not applicable and/or that's the reason for no unmet need. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me.

This is a great group. We support it 100%.

There are a number of providers of general business and technology skills training for CE for librarians. What we really lack are the courses that are specific to library skills.

Please note that we found the categories "no need", "existing need" and "top priority" to be a bit different from how we identify our training needs, and therefore found it difficult to decide a category for many of these items. For instance, we are currently offering continuing education in many, if not most, of these areas. However, there is still need for more training opportunities on the topics. This is why you will see so many categories noted as "top priority" - meaning, yes, we still think it's important to have additional training opportunities in these areas.

A national agenda should be broad enough that it will be applicable to all localities. Some topics are more easily covered on scale than others.

Needs vary -- all of the items listed are needed by someone in our library community. Currently though leadership training, community building and strategic planning seem to be foremost. Also we are seeing an increasing number of "new" library directors, many who have little or no experience in libraries -- being small, rural libraries.