

Abstract
Recruiting the Next Generation of Nebraska Librarians @ the Movies

Recruitment of professional staff has been historically difficult in rural Nebraska. The need for pre-professional library staff to make the transition to librarianship became abundantly clear as Nebraska Library Commission staff conducted the recent *Library Services and Technology Act Long Range Plan Five-Year Evaluation* (April 2002)¹ (hereafter referred to as *Making a Difference Evaluation* and excerpted as Appendix A). Further analysis and refinement of the data regarding the need for library practitioners is a high priority and is identified as an early activity in this project.

The Nebraska Library Commission submitted a new long range plan to the Institute of Museum and Library Services. This document, *Making a difference @ your library™: Nebraska Library Services and Technology Act Plan for Library & Information Services 2003-2007* (July 2002)² (hereafter referred to as *Making a Difference Plan* and excerpted as Appendix B), listed four major trends and issues facing Nebraska's libraries. One of these issues highlights the problem of recruitment and retention of Nebraska library personnel.

On November 1, 2002, the Nebraska Library Commission convened a broad-based task force representing library staff and supporters from all types of libraries across the state to begin to address this need. The task force developed recommendations to address Nebraska library personnel recruitment and retention needs, leading to this grant application. This task force will serve as the steering committee in implementation of this project. Individuals and organizations represented on this task force are listed in Appendix C.

This project will:

- Develop a marketing campaign to raise awareness and identify prospects for library service careers
- Recruit promising high school and college students, and diverse library personnel, matching them with mentor/recruiters and educational/employment opportunities at whatever rung of the career/education ladder they can enter
- Provide grants, scholarships, and stipends to support the pursuit of pre-professional and professional education

Recruiting the Next Generation of Nebraska Librarians @ the Movies will address **IMLS Priority 3: Recruit future librarians**. This project will target promising high school and college students in an effort to increase the number of students enrolled in pre-professional education or training programs. This will enable them to acquire skills and education necessary to provide enhanced service in underserved communities *and* prepare them for master's level education. This project draws on the methods developed in the Making a Difference process to determine the focus of the initial marketing and implementation. The primary strategy is a one-on-one, each-one-recruit-one, mentoring approach. The recruitment phase focuses on raising awareness, stereotype busting, and enticing young adults (high school/college) and pre-professional library workers into library skills training at whatever rung of the career/education ladder they can enter, with increasing the number of professionally trained librarians in Nebraska as the ultimate goal.

In the **Recruitment** phase, mentor/recruiters will be trained to use a multi-media campaign (including a movie trailer, print and radio communication, and Web resources) to identify and inform prospects about the opportunities for rewarding careers in library service. The resources will be made available to K-12, Postsecondary, and public library staff, as well as library supporters and advocates, helping them to form a statewide network of mentor/recruiters. Resources will be developed in both English and Spanish to help achieve a more diverse cadre of library professionals in Nebraska. The **Education** phase will match prospects with appropriate educational resources at whatever rung of the career/education ladder they can enter, providing student stipends and internships. The **Employment** phase will match prospects with appropriate employment resources at whatever rung of the career/education ladder they can enter, providing employment stipends and internships.

¹ www.nlc.state.ne.us/mission/lstareports/2002-eval/index.html

² <http://www.nlc.state.ne.us/mission/lstaplan/2003-2007planindex.html>