

## **Working Assumptions Guiding the Revision of the Multitype Library System Standards**

October, 2008

During its initial meetings, the Library System Standards Committee developed the following underlying assumptions to guide its work. As the overarching principle that informs these assumptions, we believe that the regional library systems are essential to the continued evolution of library service in Illinois and that they are a critical element in maintaining the overall quality of the statewide library service. Many services are most effective (and in some cases – only possible) when provided collectively by library systems rather than by individual libraries.

System area and per capita grant funding from the state has not increased in recent years despite increases in the cost of all areas of library services and materials. Given this unfortunate trend and the current economic climate, these assumptions are written with the recognition that state funds will be inadequate to support library needs for the foreseeable future.

The committee also recognizes that both standards for library systems' services and clearly articulated expectations for system member libraries must be reflected in the revised standards document.

### **Assumptions:**

1. Standards of service for Illinois library systems promote accountability, ensure a consistent framework for planning and provide a justification for system funding.
2. Financial accountability, uniformity in reporting, and transparency are critical for all system services and should be addressed through the system standards.
3. Effective standards must specify a level of basic services required for library systems and the associated responsibilities of member libraries, along with a framework for establishing standards for extended services.
4. Flexible standards allow for creative ways to provide basic and extended services.
5. Collaborative relationships are essential. Some system services can be provided more economically and/or effectively through collaboration among library systems and with other entities.
6. System grant funds, administered by the Illinois State Library/Office of the Secretary of State, support a uniform, basic level of statewide services at no direct cost to member libraries.
7. Systems are encouraged to pursue alternative revenue sources beyond grant state grant funds for the development and provision of extended services. This may include (but is not limited to) fee recovery charges for services by participating libraries.
8. Each library system should work with members in developing standards for extended service. Extended services provided by more than one system should have consistent standards statewide.
9. The Illinois State Library, the regional library systems, and Illinois libraries will coordinate and cooperate to plan and execute necessary services and programs in order to provide the best possible library service for Illinoisans.