Texas Public Libraries Annual Report
Frequently asked questions

Thank you to the librarians who provided these questions! If you have any others, please call or email the Library Development and Networking (LDN) Annual Report/Accreditation staff at accreditation@tsl.texas.gov.

The questions are grouped by topic. Click on the subject heading to go directly to those questions.

COVID-19-related Questions

Q: Our expenditures this year will not meet the library's maintenance of effort (MOE). How can the library stay accredited?

A: In order to prevent hardship to libraries and their communities due to the current emergency situation, the Commission has adopted an emergency rule creating a waiver for libraries for certain standards, including, but not limited to, Local Operating Expenditures and Quantitative Standards for Accreditation of Library, as set out in 13 TAC §1.74 and §1.81 (http://tinyurl.com/TACaccreditation). What will be important is to include the reason(s) the pandemic impacted the library's ability to meet the eligibility criteria to receive the Emergency Waiver. If there are other causes for the lowered expenditures, you may need to appeal to the LSA board.

Q: We are facing budget cuts for the coming fiscal year or years, due to loss of tax revenue during the pandemic. How can the library stay accredited?

A: Continue to submit the Annual Report. There may be indirect costs that can make up the difference. Alternatively, city- or county-wide cuts can form the basis of an appeal to the LSA Board. This issue may also be addressed under the new Emergency Rule covered above.

Q: Our library is closed for an indefinite time. Should we still submit an Annual Report?

A: YES. The annual communication from your library to ours is vital for so many reasons. Outside of accreditation, the statistics we generate form a state- and nation-wide picture of the role and value of libraries that should not be lost, even if our facilities are closed.

Q: Our facility is not open to the public, but staff are working. Is the library open?

A: Yes and… We expect to see fewer open hours on the 2020 report. Everyone is aware of the impact the pandemic has had on businesses, government, recreation, the economy, etc., so this will be reflected in the Annual Report. When reporting "hours open," this is the number of hours the building is open to the public. You will have the opportunity to report the actual service hours-- the hours that the staff has been answering questions, providing curbside delivery, cleaning, and weeding--at another place in the Report.

Q: How do we count library visits?

A: Follow the current definition. These will be down since the library building is not open to the public. Curbside service will be reflected in the library's circulation numbers, staff responses to questions will be reported in reference transactions, programs and attendance counts will be reported, as well.

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Q: All of our programs are now virtual. Will this be counted differently?

A: Yes! For live programs that are held online count total or peak views. Recorded programs do not follow the existing definition but should be tracked and tallied for the library's stakeholders. More information on this will be published on the Annual Report webpage, https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ldn/annualreport.

Q: We now leave our Wi-Fi on 24 hour and have expanded its range. How do we report this?

A: Wi-Fi sessions must be tracked using software on the library's router. More information on how to do this can be found here: Count Your Wi-Fi Usage.

Financial Concerns

Q. What's the difference between library operating expenditures, and capital expenditures?
A. Local accounting practice determines this. In general, however,

- Library operating expenditures are current and ongoing costs necessary to support library services. This includes staff expenditures, collection materials, supplies, programming costs, etc.
- Capital expenditures are one-time only or extraordinary expenditures. These are major capital expenditures such as the acquisition of or additions to fixed assets. This can include furnishings, equipment and initial book stock for new buildings, building additions or renovations, library automation systems, and new vehicles. Most governing authorities have capital thresholds, as well, that may help you determine how to classify expenditures, so be sure to check with city accounting or financial staff, county auditor, or board treasurer.

Q. What is the difference between question 4.2, Local Operating Expenditures and 4.3, Local Government Expenditures?

A. The total operating expenditures for your library, calculated in question 3.11, may be funded from a variety of sources of revenue, which are reported in Section 5. Question 4.3 is potentially only a portion of 4.2.

- If the library's only source of funding is from a local government entity or entities (city, county, school or district), then the amounts in 4.2 and 4.3 would be the same.
- If the library has received any local grant revenue (local Dollar General), or any funds from fines, fees or donations, or funds from the Friends group, then those amounts would only be included in question 4.2 (local operating expenditures), and not in 4.3 (local government operating expenditures).

Q. We have a new director, who started after the end of the reporting year. Who will be cited as the Director in this report? What salary amount should be used?

A. We ask for current contact information in Section 1 of the report, so the current (new) director will be the name on the document and the signature page. The salary for that position, as of the end of the local fiscal year, is the one that will be used in question 8.6.

Q. Where are ILL reimbursements reported? How about other grants from the State Library?
A. The reimbursement funds for **ILL (interlibrary loan)**, and all funds from **competitive grant** programs (Impact, Cooperation, Special Projects, TexTreasures and Texas Reads) awarded through Texas State Library (TSLAC) come from federal funds. Only report what you received and spent during the library's local fiscal year. These are always considered to be non-local funds and should be subtracted out in Section 3 where appropriate and never included in Section 4.

If those funds are used for library operating expenditures (always true for ILL) , report the funds in question 5.6, Federal Operating Revenue. If used for capital expenditures, report those funds in question 5.14, Federal Capital Revenue.

Q. Where are E-rate funds reported?
A. The E-rate reimbursements for telecommunications are NOT included in this report. This is a federal discount program which reimburses costs, not grant funds which are being given out. If you received funds from TSLAC's

Libraries Connecting Texas (LCT), report those funds in question 5.5, if used for operating costs and 5.13 for capital expenditures.

Q. If our Friends group paid for our summer programming, should that amount should be reported?

A. No. Only the expenditures and revenues which come through the library's budget directly should be included in this report.

Q. Is there a benefit to having friends/donors pay directly for programs versus having them give the funds to the library to pay for programs?

A. As to the pros and cons of paying out of a library budget, or out of the Friends' funds, this is a decision which must be made on a local level. Just keep in mind that only Friends' revenue paid directly to the library can be reported and the expenditures made from them by the library can count towards Maintenance of Effort and the Per Capita Expenditure requirements. Resources on overall financial planning can be obtained by contacting our Library Consultants at ld@tsl.texas.gov.

Q. Our library, in partnership with a local museum, wrote a Tocker grant for digitization. Do we have to report the amount?

A. If grant funds were received and expended by the library, those amounts should be included in the report.

Q. If grant funds were not paid to the library but were paid directly to the vendor, do we report that amount anywhere?

A. No. If grant funds do not come through the library directly, they should not be included in this report.

Q. Our friends group maintains a separate bank account for our library and the funds are not deposited into a city account, so where are those funds reported?

A. You will not include that funding or purchases made from that account in this report.

Q. Our library received nearly $450 in free books from a book fair held at our library. Where would this be reported?

A. It is not included in this report; only actual expenditures made by the library are included.

Q. What is mean by "in-kind" contributions? Can those be reported?

A. No, any in-kind contributions are not reported. This refers to services, goods or transactions provided without involving an exchange of funds. For the purposes of the Annual Report, we do not allow the reporting of the estimated value of in-kind services, because the financial sections are based on actual expenditures, not estimates. For example, the donation of books, furniture, or even someone's time, should not be represented financially in this report.

Q. Where would gifts and memorials from individuals be reported?

A. Cash donations, gifts, and memorials are reported in one of two questions, depending on how the funds are spent.

- If used to support operating costs of the library, they are reported in question 5.8, Other Local Sources of Operating Revenue.
- If used in a capital campaign, or for other capital acquisitions, they are reported in question 5.16, Other Local Sources of Capital Revenue..

Q. The library receives both fines and donations. However, we are only allowed to spend the donations line item. The fines go to the city's General Revenue Fund. Do we report both or just the one we can spend? What do we include in section 4.2?

A. Only report those revenues that are allocated to the library – which the library is allowed or authorized to spend – in this report. If there are fines and fees that are collected, but used elsewhere in the city's or county's budget, then those funds do not need to be reported.

Population Assignments

Q. Where can we find the information about the library's population assignment and maintenance of effort (MOE)?

A. There is a look-up tool, the **Population & MOE Planning Tool**, located in two places:

1. The Annual Report webpage: https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ldn/annualreport

2. The Home page of Texas LibPAS: https://tx.countingopinions.com/

Additionally, you can contact LDN staff for assistance in calculating and understanding the calculations behind the MOE or populations at accreditation@tsl.texas.gov.

Q. Why is my population assignment so large when my community and library are so small?

A. Population assignment is based on a formula outlined in the administrative rules (http://tinyurl.com/PopSrvd), and is based on the source, or sources, of local government funding.

- If the library accepts any amount of funding from another city, county or school district, the library will be assigned at least a portion of that population.
- Any library that accepts county funding must serve anyone in that county, even if the library is not assigned the entire county's population.
- Multiple libraries in a county that receive county funding will be assigned a proportional amount of the county's population.

We advise libraries to be extremely cautious in accepting funding from other cities or from their county. Please contact us directly if you are considering acceptance of those funds, and we will assist you in determining the accreditation issues that may arise.

Q.   Is County Librarian Certification grandfathered with the sitting librarian or does this come into play when librarian changes after population reaches 25,000?
A. The Texas State Library no longer has a County Librarian certification program – that authority was removed with Sunset legislation in 2007.

A library is only required to have "Professional Librarians" as defined in RULE §1.84, on staff when its assigned population is 25,001 or higher. This does not have to be the director who holds the MLS; it can be a staff person who fulfills the required number of hours, based on the library's assigned population.

Q. If our city population is about. 6,000 and the county we serve is close to 40,000; should we have an MLS Director?
A. The need for a Professional Librarian on staff, to maintain accreditation, is determined by the population that is assigned by the staff at the State Library, according to RULE §1.71. This is formulaic, and is determined by sources of local government revenue, as reported to us on this annual survey. It is not determined by geographic boundaries or designations.

Statistical measures

Q. How do you count a visitor that comes in twice in a day?
A. Library visits, or the gate count, should be recorded any time anyone comes into the library, for any purpose. This includes staff (again, one way), and visitors who may leave and come in again. If someone comes in twice, that counts as two visits.

Q. Are voters counted when the library is a designated election place?

A. If the library serves as a polling place, AND the voters come into the library to vote, rather than a hallway or meeting room adjacent to the library door, then those voters will be counted in Library Visits. The voting does not count as a program, as it is not sponsored nor presented by the library.

Q. How should we count a tax assistance program?

A. Again, if this is conducted inside the library, then those using this service are counted in Library Visits. This will not be included in Library Programs, nor should these visitors be counted in Program Attendance, since this is a one-to-one service.

Q. Do we report our Wi-Fi logins and if so where do we get that info?

A. Question 10.5 asks if there is a Wi-Fi access (wireless internet system) available to users at the library, and if there is, then report the total number of sessions, if available. This information is generally collected by specialized software on the library's router (part of the computer network). For more information, contact Henry Stokes, Library Technology Consultant (hstokes@tsl.texas.gov) or your local IT support.

Q. What do you mean by Circulation: digital?

A. Any circulation of downloadable materials. Electronic (digital, downloadable) materials are materials that are distributed digitally and can be accessed via a computer, the Internet, or a portable device such as an e-book reader. Types of electronic materials include e-books and *downloadable* electronic video and audio files. This count should not include any CD or DVD check-outs.

Q. Do we count all the eBooks in our consortium or only the eBooks that we buy?

A. Count all eBooks to which your patrons have access, whether selected by the consortium, or the library, not just what is purchased or selected by the library.

Q. We use OverDrive for our eBooks. How would we count those eBooks?

A. OverDrive should be able to provide a report to your library regarding the number of titles available to your patrons. Contact OverDrive directly, or your local coordinator or representative, if the library is part of a consortium. Report all the eBook titles to which your patrons have access. Count only the circulation for your patrons.

Q. If you have a book on CD that is formatted to be downloaded to an MP3 player, how is that counted?

A. That would be reported in questions 6.3 (audio materials – physical materials – titles) and 6.4 (audio materials – physical materials – items).

Q. Where do we report programs targeting families?

A. You can decide which program category you think they best fit into. Please just make sure that you report both the program and its attendance in the same category. For instance, if you decide to report it as an Adult Program, then count the attendance in the Adult Program Attendance question, as well. The important thing is that all programs get counted!

Other questions

Q. How long is the period for the long-range plan? Who needs to review this document?

A. RULE §1.83(6): The library must have a long-range plan that is approved by its governing board. This plan must be reviewed and updated at least every five years and must include both a collection development element and a technology element. The time period and any other elements the plan contains are locally determined.

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The long-range plan should be reviewed and approved by the library's governing board/entity.

For more information and additional resources, see the Planning Resources webpage, https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ldn/workshops/slm/longrangeplanning.

Q. Will the City Manager's approval count in place of approval by City Council?

A. The Application for Accreditation will need to be signed by someone with contract authority, either Mayor or City Manager for a city – not the City Secretary. Whether the application must go to Council for approval is determined locally. The long-range plan needs to be approved by the governing board, whether that is a city council, commissioner's court, or an advisory board.

Q. What does the website have to have to be considered a website?

A. RULE §1.83(1): The library must have a website and a telephone with a published number. There are no details provided with this; however, the Accreditation Task Force that recommended this change agreed that no social media sites (Facebook, Twitter page, etc.) would be acceptable as a library website. If you need more information about best practices for an organization website, contact Henry Stokes, our Library Technology Consultant, at hstokes@tsl.texas.gov.

Q. How do we see our report from last year to compare?

A. Log in to the data collection portal, Texas LibPAS, click on Enter and then look for the word, "Print" in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Clicking on Print will pop up a dialogue box with these options:

> Template–a PDF-format of the entire workbook: questions, definitions and responses (about 20 pages)
> Screen—a PDF-format of just the questions and responses (about 12-15 pages)
> Cancel—Exit the dialogue box.

When the forms download, you can save them electronically or print them at your convenience.