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GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A LIBRARY WITHIN EPA

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Preface

Occasional requests for assistance regarding the establishment of a library within a Program Office, a Laboratory, or a Region are received by this office.

This guide is not a directive. It is a tool for use by EPA management in determining the need for a library within a program Office, an existing or new laboratory, or branches of an office physically located at a distance from the parent organization.

It is also designed for use by EPA Librarians who are asked to assist in the establishment of such libraries.

GUIDELINES FOR ESTABLISHING A LIBRARY WITHIN EPA

Introduction. Within EPA there are twenty-eight libraries which cooperate to provide all EPA staff with literature needs in all environmental areas of concern. The Library Systems Branch, EPA Headquarters, acts as a coordinating office, providing technical guidance and support, and providing services which can best be performed centrally for the good of all. Local libraries provide direct user services and act as the contact point for the centralized services.

Within EPA, a library is defined as a unit providing library services, staffed by at least one full time person, and housing an organized collection of materials to support user informational needs.

EPA facilities which do not have established libraries are provided library service through the library system, either through the nearest library, through the Regional Library, or through the Central Technical Library in Cincinnati or Headquarters Library in Washington, D. C. A list of the EPA libraries is attached.

Need for a Library. In determining the need for a library, several things need to be considered. These are listed below, not in any order of priority.

1. How many people are located at the facility who will require library service?

2. Are there any special library needs which the group has, but which cannot be served by a nearby EPA library?

3. Are there overriding program considerations which make a library imperative, i.e., an entirely new program area in which present EPA libraries have not been building collections? Can these collections be built by one of the central support libraries in the EPA Library System?

4. What is the time period required for delivery of needed literature? Can researchers needs be adequately supplied through existing mail services? Through the Central Library System if modified?

5. From what sources do researchers obtain required information at the present time?

6. Can uncontrolled collections or reading rooms suffice in place of a library, or does the requirement exist for an organized information base in place of an existing disorganized information situation?

7. To what extent must researchers make use of the library collections in a library itself? How often each week? How many hours each week?

8. What requirements exist for specialized journals, books and report literature? What is the anticipated size of the library collection; anticipated yearly growth?

9. Should the library be established as a branch of an existing EPA library or as an independent equal operation within the library system? Does the existing library have the resources required to operate a branch library?

10. What services should the library be expected to provide?

Library Objectives. Libraries in EPA are responsible for acquiring, processing and making available to EPA staff any environmental literature necessary to the support of the Agency's mission. Collections and services in the various libraries are designed to serve the needs of users at each local level. The library makes use of the centralized programs and services to the greatest extent possible to serve local needs at a minimal cost in money, time and duplicate collection activities.

Levels of Library Activity. Listed below are activities and services which, when provided by a library, make up minimal, intermediate and maximal levels at which a library may operate. They are provided almost exactly as they appear in Special Libraries: A Guide for Management, published by the Special Libraries Association in 1975.

Minimum Level

1. Acquiring Materials for the Library:

Collects publications scattered throughout the organization, receives those that come automatically to the library, and checks these materials for relevancy and to avoid duplication.

Keeps abreast of the organization's general interests and needs for published materials.

Reviews announcements of new publications and selects and orders directly from the publisher.

Establishes a simple order record.

2. Organizing Materials in the Library:

Places books on shelves in a simple, logical order--for example, by author or by broad subject grouping.

Arranges magazines and other periodicals by title and date.

Separates and files pamphlets, clippings, and other ephemeral material by subject.

Identifies all major publications in the library by author and title and brings such records together in a card catalog.

3. Disseminating Information and Materials from the Library:

Maintains a collection of reference books.

Answers simple, factual reference questions.

Verifies titles of publications and tracks down references.

Directs those needing detailed or research information to possible sources.

Routes new issues of magazines to those who have requested them; or loans for short period of time after new issues have been available in library for a reasonable review period for all users.

Routes individual items to staff members whose interests are known.

Knows the resources of local libraries well enough for full utilization.

Intermediate Level

1. Acquiring Materials for the Library:

Keeps informed about the developing needs of the organization and imaginatively selects materials in anticipation of actual requirements.

Establishes contacts with book, magazine and government documents dealers for expediting orders.

Begins to acquire and set up special collections of materials such as patents, internal reports, maps, and pictures.

Creates and maintains a complete order file with automatic follow-up procedures and, where feasible, takes advantage of available

electronic data processing facilities and equipment.

Reviews the library's collections and builds up weak areas.

Establishes a regular system of checking with staff authorities for evaluations of publication.

2. Organizing Materials in the Library:

Orders printed catalog cards for books.

Adopts a published classification scheme and uses it for subject arrangement of books.

Adopts a published subject heading list for cataloging books and for indexing selected pamphlets, clippings, and other materials.

Devises specific filing and finding systems for special collections such as patents, maps, and pictures.

3. Disseminating Information and Materials from the Library:

Gathers research materials pertinent to a question and transmits them to requesters.

Prepares selective bibliographies.

Undertakes comprehensive literature searches on request.

Distributes lists of current literature received, sometimes including abstracts copied from published sources.

Has broad familiarity with nationwide library resources in pertinent subject fields.

Maximum Level

1. Acquiring Materials for the Library:

Periodically does formal research concerning users' needs.

Establishes personal contacts with experts and dealers of unusual publications--out-of-print, unpublished, foreign, etc.

Prepares a written selection policy.

Sets up and maintains specialized collections, such as catalogs of executive development programs, computer print-outs, and archival material of the organization.

2. Organizing Materials in the Library:

Creates subject organization systems tailored to its needs, such as classification schemes, subject heading lists, or thesauri, if not provided through the central library system.

Indexes articles, reports, and other materials in depth, possibly using mechanical methods, when these are are not covered by commercial indexing and abstracting services, or other existing systems.

Prepares abstracts of published materials as necessary for specialized bibliographies, reference files and the like, if these abstracts do not already exist in other systems or commercial services.

3. Disseminating Information and Materials from the Library:

Locates, synthesizes, and evaluates information and provides it in written summary form.

Prepares critical bibliographies.

Prepares evaluative comprehensive literature searches.

Distributes abstracts of current literature received.

Provides library-prepared translations of articles in some languages.

Regularly prepares and supplies applicable current information for the specific requirements of individual users, e.g., SDI (Selective Dissemination of Information) systems.

Is prepared to provide editorial help of all kinds for the organization's publication, unless this is the responsibility of another local EPA office.

Has thorough knowledge of subject experts and possible sources of unpublished information in the subject fields.

Staffing a Library. Qualified, trained staff are essential to good library services. On the job training to inform the librarian about the organization to be served, as well as the EPA Agency-wide library systems, will take a few of the early months the librarian is on the job. Specialized training programs developed by the Library Systems Branch are available to all library staffs within the Agency.

Ratios of library staffs to the users served vary according to the subject matter covered. In some chemistry libraries the ratio is 1 librarian to every 3 to 12 chemists; in newspaper libraries the ratio is more likely to be 1 to 90; in engineering libraries the ratio is closer to 1 to 30 or 40; in social science libraries, the ratio may be more nearly 1 to 60. A good rule of thumb in establishing a new library is to use a ratio of 1 library staff member required to serve about 50 active users. The active user base are people who need to use a library in the performance of their job as opposed to just professionals who drop in every so often.

A clear understanding of the levels of service to be provided by the library needs to be determined before the type of library staff required to provide these services can be determined. The relationship between the to-be-established library and others within the EPA library system must also be determined.

In establishing a library which is to provide the maximum level of service as defined earlier in this guide, a professional librarian is essential. To provide the intermediate level of service, a library technician with several years of experience is essential. To maintain a library providing a minimum level of service, a library technician or library clerk with considerable experience or training is essential. The clerk should be permitted some additional training within another of the EPA libraries to become familiar with services provided centrally and what may be expected in the way of centralized services for this new library from the library system.

Costs of a Library. Libraries are not inexpensive items. In research and development organizations the library or information center allocation totals, in general, from 2% or 3% to 9% or 10% of the research budget. This represents the allocation for one year's operating expenses.

In the development of a new library, costs include the purchase of equipment and preparation of space assigned to the library, and the basic collection required before a library can provide services at any level. Shelving costs may be estimated at $1.00 per volume of anticipated size of the collection if only a few hundred items are involved; for quantities exceeding 500 volumes the per volume cost approaches $.50 and continues to decrease with more sizeable collections. Costs for desks, chairs, typewriters and file cabinets will depend on the level of function and the number of staff members.

Annual operating costs for libraries include funds for salaries, collection (books, journals, reports, microform, audio-visuals, etc.), supplies, equipment, computer use, travel, memberships. Printing,

postage and reproduction costs are quite heavy for libraries involved in inter-library loans. These are not often reflected in the budget presented for libraries, but instead are absorbed as part of the Agency's overall administrative support budget. The amount allocated for collection is normally about 25% of the total library budget, salaries about 65 to 70%, and the other 5 - 10% cover the items listed above. A serious variable is computer usage and the extent to which the library makes use of the Agency-wide data processing support.

Space and Equipment Requirements. Library space requirements are divided into three categories, space for the staff, space for the collection and space for use of the collection or reader areas.

Standard space allocations for office workers are generally 100 square feet per worker.

Based on standard 3 foot library shelves, with sections of seven shelves high, approximately 8 books to each linear foot may be used in determining storage for collections. Figures of 15 volumes per square foot of net room area are also used.

Reading areas should provide space for 10% of the active user base to be in the library at any one time. When a combination of reading tables and individual study carrels are used, approximately 25 square foot per user should be provided.

In order to make maximum use of space provided, EPA libraries are encouraged to maintain large proportions of collections in microform. This in turn requires provision of readers and reader/printers for microfiche and microfilm. Maintenance agreements on these pieces of equipment are important once the guarantee period has expired.

Other special equipment such as a computer terminal or audio-visual equipment may be required, depending on the level of library activity and the programs it carries out.

Guidelines for Collection Development. New libraries will identify the work being done in, and the subject areas of concern for, the local office served, and then determine which materials will best satisfy the requirements of the users in this location. Since the collections in any EPA library are considered available to all EPA staff at any location, careful review should be made before extensive purchases of any materials are made.

Initially, the library will purchase general reference materials such as Who's Who, dictionaries, encyclopedias, congressional directories, and the like. Following this, selection will be made of the major reference works relative to the particular subject area of concern. Subscriptions will be entered for the major journals in the special subject area, as well as a selected few general environmental titles. As a rule back issues of these titles are not purchased if they are available from another near-by EPA library or other local libraries. If a later decision is made to purchase any of the back-files, the microfilm version should be considered.

As a part of the EPA library system program, all EPA libraries receive a complete set of EPA reports on microfiche along with the accompanying indexes by which the set is accessed. Other reports included in the environmental pollution and control category at the National Technical Information Service (NTIS) may be reviewed and

if the interest is great enough, a subscription for automatic receipt of these items, in hard copy or microfiche, may be initiated.

In order to retain the quality and up-to-dateness of the collection, the following criteria for determining materials to be purchased should be observed:

1. Items to update reference collection of general works, replacing needed out-of-date items.

2. Items to fill gaps in collection covering air, noise, pesticides, radiation, solid waste, toxic substences and water pollution and control from the economic, legal, management, scientific and technical, and social impact aspects. A conscious effort should be made to collect the best reference and supportive materials in those areas represented in the staff of any one location.

3. Items should be selected on the basis of their availability elsewhere in the general geographic areas, elsewhere in the EPA library systems, and demonstrated need by EPA staff.

4. Generally, items should not be duplicated in any collection; indefinite loans should be kept at a minimum.

5. Items providing general background in a subject area are important; other items added should be current updating of a field; new research results and state-of-the-art in environmental areas.

6. Items written by well known authorities in the field, keeping local staff interest in mind.

7. Reviews should be obtained on as many items as possible before purchases are made.

8. Political considerations must be taken into account when

Date Due

items are requested which are not rated as the highest quality.

9. Items of environmental interest in the geographical area of concern to the library should be acquired.

10. Textbooks used in courses paid for by the Environmental Protection Agency should be added to library collection when courses are complete.