

**YALSA Executive Committee Meeting
October 21-22, 2011**

Topic: State Library Youth Consultants' Survey Results

Background: In September 2011, YALSA surveyed state library agency youth consultants. The survey covered five major topics: statewide initiatives, individual professional development, statewide training, finances, and advocacy. There was an additional comments section for respondents to provide further thoughts and suggestions. A total of 25 consultants completed the required questions of the survey.

Action Required: Discussion

Survey Results:

Initiatives:

- 40% of respondents said that they started planning major library initiatives such as summer reading programs 6-12 months in advance, and another 36% said they plan more than 12 months out.
- 64% of respondents are not participating in YALSA's initiatives, including Teen Read Week™, Teen Tech Week™, Teens' Top Ten and District Days. Of those who do participate, Teen Read Week has the highest participation at 36%.
- Two primary reasons for lack of participation include lack of resources (financial and staff) and non-direct contact with teens.

Individual Professional Development

- 75% of respondents said that lack of resources (funding, staff and time) was the biggest challenge they currently face in their job.
- 58% of respondents cited technology or programming as CE topics they were interested in that would help them with their daily work. Other mentions were best practices, marketing, and cultivating partnerships.
- Monthly email messages from YALSA's Executive Director, and *VOYA* magazine are the two top ways consultants stay up-to-date on young adult services and trends.
- 83% of employers do not cover membership in a professional organization, but many assist with the cost of CE and traveling to conferences

State Wide Training

- Technology, programming and perception of teens/adolescent behavior topped the list as the three most important training priorities for librarians that state youth consultants serve
- 41% of consultants host trainings 3 or fewer times per year and 27% host trainings 4-6 times per year

YALSA Executive Committee Meeting – October 2011
Topic: State Library Youth Consultants' Survey Results
Item #23

- Trainings are split 50-50 between face to face and a combination of online and face to face
- 50% of consultants responded that youth services librarians (serving both children and teens) were the largest audience for their trainings. 18% responded that library generalists were their largest audience.
- 100% of respondents stated that a teen-focused training kit would be somewhat to very useful to librarians in their state
 - 59% were interested in a training kit on digital literacy/teens and technology and 27% were interested in a training kit on adolescent development and behavior.

Finances

- 77% of state libraries fiscal year is July 1 – June 30
- 65% of respondents have \$1,000 or less to spend of youth-focused promotional materials
- Annual training budgets:
 - 27% have a training budget of under \$1,000
 - 23% have a budget of \$1,000 – \$5,000
 - 23% have a budget of \$5,001 -\$ 10,000
- 73% responded that 10-20% of their budget is dedicated to teen services
- 50% of state libraries buy materials in bulk and 50% do not
- 73% have used LSTA funds for teen-focused programs
- 5% have sought and received grant funds from a source other than LSTA/IMLS

Advocacy

- 24% responded that advocacy plays no role in their position; 75% responded that advocacy constitutes less than 25% of their job
- 71% provide advocacy resources to the librarians in their state
- State level advocacy
 - 81% responded that their state library has advocacy days/events/initiatives
 - 59% participate in those events
 - For the 40% who do not participate, 83% said that someone else from their department attends
- Several respondents said rules restrict their ability to advocate, lobby or be involved in political activities

Analysis:

Six major issues emerged from the survey results.

1) Lack of resources in money time and staff emerged again and again as a major issue for state consultants. On average, most states have less than \$1,000 to spend on CE training and less than \$1,000 to spend on promotional materials. Lack of resources limits consultants' ability to build their own training resources and to purchase resources from YALSA. Most respondents use LSTA funds to fund teen-focused training. The disparity in funds available for children's vs. teen services points to a need for YALSA to target some advocacy efforts at the state level.

- 2) Technology emerged as a major issue. Respondents stated that they wanted to learn more about technology for their own professional development and that training in technology is one of the highest priorities for librarians in their state. Programming also emerged as an area of interest. YALSA is already providing resources and CE in this area; however, many state consultants are not taking advantage of it. A future state consultants' webinar that focuses on technology can help with this issue.
- 3) A teen-focused training toolkit is a resource state consultants are interested in. Given that most respondents provide training to youth services librarians and library generalists, it is clear that there is a lack of training focused on working with teens. This is a significant hole that YALSA is poised to step into and take the lead.
- 4) Involvement in national initiatives is low. Reasons given are non-direct contact with teens and lack of resources. YALSA can work to have the consultants push the information about YALSA's national initiatives out of their offices and down to front line librarians and also create customized resources for use at the state level.
- 5) YALSA's resources are too advanced for many front line librarian generalists and library support staff, which comprise the majority of the librarians these consultants serve. Many library workers who are serving teens do not have specific training in services to teens, as evidenced by the fact that most are youth services librarians or library generalists. YALSA should consider creating another tier of training that is "bare bones" training that covers the essentials of teen services in a manner that is approachable to individuals who are not teen services specialists.
- 6) Advocacy is conflated with political activity such as lobbying. Many respondents stated that they were unable to participate in advocacy activities because they are limited in their political activities by being a state employee. This misperception is hindering young adult advocacy efforts and needs to be addressed through training, information dissemination and other means.

Recommendations

- Continue with quarterly webinars for State Youth consultants. Webinars help to foster a working relationship with the youth consultants and help keep them apprised of what is occurring in YALSA. The webinars provide an opportunity for free continuing education and help YALSA learn about trends and issues at the state level.
- Continue to host luncheon at Annual for youth consultants. This is a valuable time to meet face to face and help cement YALSA's working relationship with the consultants.
- Continue monthly email message to state consultants. A recent creation by Beth Yoke, this newsletter has quickly become the go-to resource for state consultants on news and trends in young adult services.

YALSA Executive Committee Meeting – October 2011
Topic: State Library Youth Consultants' Survey Results
Item #23

- Build youth consultants' knowledge and skills in fiscal matters and grant seeking. Revise YALSA's budgeting online class to address the fiscal needs of state consultants and offer it free or at cost only to state consultants.
- Create two teen-focused training kits. Adapt the course content from two YALSA online courses, *Connect, Create, Collaborate: Supporting Teen Needs through Technology* and *Navigating the Divide between Teens and Tweens*. The first will provide training and resources for using technology and the second will provide training and resources for adolescent development and will also touch on programming.
- Address the misperception that all advocacy is lobbying through a multifaceted approach, including working with Washington Office to develop a webinar on non-political advocacy, including information about this in YALSA's updated advocacy toolkit, publishing an article in YALS and creating blog posts about it (see Linda Braun's Oct. 4th post: <http://tinyurl.com/3u83bo8>)
- Create customized, turn-key Teen Read Week and Teen Tech Week resources for use at the state level to help increase buy-in and participation from state consultants.
- Create YALSA-specific funding opportunities, such as grants or awards, specifically for state library agencies to increase their capacity to serve the teens in their state and to extend YALSA's reach.
- Incorporate, brand and promote 'basic' training as a part of YALSA's overall CE portfolio, which will be aimed at library generalists and support staff who work with teens.
- Help prepare youth consultants for the next round of LSTA funds. The cycle begins in 2012, with 5 year plans being developed for 2013 – 2017.

Possible Next Steps:

- Create an ad-hoc Board committee to prioritize recommendations and draft an implementation plan
- Create a group or assign individuals to work on a specific recommendation, such as a proposal to establish an award for state agencies
- Assemble a youth consultants focus or advisory group to inform work on any projects that move forward
- Direct staff to carry out some or all of the recommendation
- Other?

Additional Resources:

- Results from the Survey Monkey survey <http://svy.mk/qR25yq>

--respectfully submitted by Eve Gaus