

Meeting to Discuss Establishing Multi-County Library Cooperative

April 3, 1996

Attendees: Jeri Canale, Highlands County Commissioner; Bonnie Dyga, Okeechobee Assistant County Administrator; Paul Erickson, Desoto County Community Services; Ed Kilroy, Okeechobee County Library Director; Marilyn Jacobs, Highlands County Library Advisory Board member; Mary Myers, Director, Highlands County Libraries; Don Obrakta, Hardee County Library Director; Walter B. Oliff, Jr., Hardee County Commissioner, Charlie Parker, State Library Consultant; Sue Rood, Highlands County Library Advisory Board Secretary.

Meeting Purpose: Acquaint county with discussions to date, the multi-county program, and determine if there is consensus to proceed in planning services, deciding how to administer the system, and developing interlocal agreements.

Multi-county Grant: State grants are available to the single administrative unit of the multi-county library that serves a combined population of 50,000 or more or three counties. The grant has two components: (1) a match on local expenditures [if 3 counties participate 10 cents on each local dollar of expenditures and 15 if 4 counties participate] and (2) a base grant of \$250,000 for libraries that have three or more participating counties. One requirement of the grant is that an individual can go to any library in the system and check out materials.

General Discussion Summary:

1. A multi-county cooperative would not affect the current proceeds for procuring funds for the individual libraries. Each local library would continue to have its own service plan and request their own state aid grants.
2. A multi-county planning committee would define the interlocal agreement which could include discussions of how to work together, how each county should benefit by joining the cooperative, how to insure that benefits are distributed equitably among counties of disparate population cooperative, define membership of an advisory board for the cooperative, and prepare an application for state funding of the cooperative (the State Aid Application deadline is October 1).
3. A long range plan should include the specific services the participating counties think should be provided by the cooperative, where to house the cooperative, determine the personnel needed to administer the cooperative goals.
4. Possible services the cooperative could provider are on-line reference library resources, central cataloging of materials, on-line catalogue of all libraries in the cooperative, technical training
5. Charlie Parker suggested to use the first year of the cooperative's existence to get the mechanics in place, fine tune the definition of services, enhance the intercounty relationships and communications, and accomplish short term goals of the cooperative.

Action items:

1. Each county will seek a recommendation from their respective County Commission Boards on participating in the multi-county cooperative before the next meeting. (Highlands County Commissioners voted to participate in the plan).

2. Each participating county will appoint 3 people to be members of a multi-county planning committee. (Highlands county representatives will be the Library Director, the County Administrator and a County Commissioner.)
3. Charlie Parker will notify the planning committee if grant money is available to fund writing a long range plan for the multi-county cooperative.
4. The next meeting of the preliminary planning committee will be Wednesday, May 15 at 10:00 AM in the Highlands County Commissioner Board Room.

Respectfully Submitted,

Sue Rood

Acting Secretary