

More than Your MLIS:

Experience and Continuing Education Recommendations for Emerging Public Library Leaders

Emerging Leaders Team H was tasked with developing continuing education recommendations for early career librarians. We surveyed MLIS program advisors and early career librarians nationwide, then analyzed and compared results. Copies of our report, which includes information about survey methodology, a full summary of results, our recommendations, and a list of continuing education resources, are available via email. The recommendations below are a direct result of the survey responses.

PLA:

- **Create a series of free, asynchronous webinars by and for new librarians.** New librarians come to the job with both competencies and gaps. Offering early career professionals the opportunity to share knowledge with their peers creates a framework for their continuing involvement in the intellectual life of our profession.
- **Create a webpage with continuing education resources targeted to gaps identified by early career librarians.** Our report provides an initial list of resources that we, and other early career librarians, have found valuable for addressing gaps in our learning.

MLIS Schools:

- **Encourage management courses & practicums.** Early career librarians and MLIS advisors both agree that a practicum in a public library provides valuable experience for students, especially for those not currently employed in a public library. Advisors should also encourage students interested in public librarianship to take advanced courses in management. Gaps in management skills were reported by 53% of respondents. Other gaps cited include programming/events, communications, social work/social issues, and outreach/advocacy.

Library Administrators:

- **Build continuing education into staff's regular duties.** Our survey revealed that the two biggest barriers to continuing education are time, cited by 62% of respondents, and money, cited by 61% of respondents. Creating meaningful opportunities for staff at all levels to address their skill gaps will, we believe, result in a professional staff that is better prepared to support our institutions in our shared mission to deliver excellence in public service.

New Librarians:

- **Embrace lifelong learning.** As professionals, it is vital that we take responsibility for preparing ourselves to respond to the ever-evolving needs of our institutions and the public we serve. We recommend doing a periodic analysis of skills and maintaining a plan to address areas of weakness.

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