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January 6, 1999

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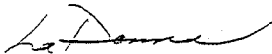
  
Dear President Symons:

As Chair of the ALA Outsourcing Task Force, it is my pleasure to respectfully present to you and the members of the Executive Board, the final report of the Task Force. It is our expectation and hope that it will provide assistance and guidance to the profession on the complicated issue of outsourcing and privatization.

The report reflects the combined thinking and recommendations of the respective members of the task force, each representing differing constituencies within our Association. This diversity in appointment was extremely beneficial to the work of the group.

The task force members have worked with enthusiasm and extreme dedication. We thank you for this opportunity to serve the Association.

Respectfully,



LaDonna T. Kienitz  
Chair, ALA Outsourcing Task Force

DATE: JANUARY 6, 1999  
REPORT TO: THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION  
FROM: THE ALA OUTSOURCING TASK FORCE

## OUTSOURCING & PRIVATIZATION IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES

<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>	PAGE
Recommendations.....	1
Background Report.....	2
The Charge to the Task Force.....	2
Definitions .....	2
Libraries are an American Value .....	3
Outsourcing and Privatization in the General Economy.....	3
Outsourcing and Privatization within Libraries.....	4
Historical Perspective.....	5
Governance Issues .....	6
Core Library Services .....	7
Human Resources Issues .....	8
Management and Long-Range Planning Issues for Libraries Considering Outsourcing.....	9
Confluence with Professional Goals.....	10
Conclusion.....	11
Citations.....	13
Review of ALA Policies and Position Statements (June 10, 1998).....	14
Members of the ALA Outsourcing Task Force .....	26

RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. ALA should reaffirm the following fundamental values of libraries in the context of discussing outsourcing and privatization of library services. These values include:
  - A. That libraries are an essential public good and are fundamental institutions in democratic societies;
  - B. That intellectual freedom is a basic democratic privilege, and that ALA defends the right of library users to read, seek information and speak freely, as guaranteed by the First Amendment; and
  - C. That any outsourcing activities in libraries must be compatible with ALA advocacy of policies that support libraries as democratic institutions serving people of all ages, income levels and races, and providing the range of information resources needed to live, learn, govern and work.
  
- II. ALA should adopt the following policy statement:
  - A. ALA opposes privatizing core library services to for-profit corporations; and that
  - B. Outsourcing of specific services or tasks by libraries be undertaken only when the quality of those services can be assured and the fundamental values of librarianship are not compromised.
  
- III. The respective ALA units should be instructed to develop decision-making guidelines for libraries and jurisdictions at the local level, specifically that:
  - A. The divisions develop policies and standards to assist local libraries addressing outsourcing and privatization issues; and
  - B. The Intellectual Freedom Committee provide an interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights as it relates to outsourcing and privatization.
  
- IV. ALA should commission a formal study on the impact of outsourcing and privatization on public services and library management, including:
  - A. A review of the impact of such activities over a defined period of time;
  - B. An analysis of the impact of these activities on library governance and First Amendment issues;
  - C. The impact on maintenance of a quality workforce; and
  - D. The impact on the community of libraries and their cooperative endeavors.

## BACKGROUND REPORT

Each of us has "inalienable rights," among which the right to be educated and informed is basic. Libraries are fundamental to a civilized society and library informational services are a public good. Government information belongs to the people and should not be sold for profit. The people's right to information and knowledge can be secured most effectively by tax-supported libraries.

—ARTHUR CURLEY

## THE CHARGE TO THE TASK FORCE

In fall 1997, ALA President Barbara Ford created the Outsourcing Task Force in response to several key incidents in librarianship related to outsourcing. Its assignment was to:

- Advise the association on issues related to outsourcing, subcontracting and privatization of library services;
- Gather data, examine the literature on outsourcing and evaluate the impact of outsourcing on library services and operations;
- Examine past ALA positions and determine how these issues relate to the ALA Code of Ethics and other association policies;
- Provide ALA Council with a comprehensive report with recommendations at the 1999 Midwinter Meeting.

The work program of the Outsourcing Task Force included reviewing the literature and all ALA policies as they relate to outsourcing and privatization; receiving testimony at Midwinter 1998 from library professionals and vendors with expertise in the areas of outsourcing and privatization; holding public hearings at both Midwinter and Annual Conference 1998; and independently researching and preparing reports on various aspects of the issue.

Based on the knowledge and the wide ranging professional experiences of the members, the Task Force has synthesized this individual and collective work into recommendations and a background report to the ALA Executive Board. An analysis of ALA policies relating to outsourcing also was prepared.

## DEFINITIONS

For the purpose of its study the Task Force has adopted the following definitions:

- Outsourcing is the contracting to external companies or organizations, functions that would otherwise be performed by library employees.
- Privatization is the shifting of policy making and the management of library services or the responsibility for the performance of core library services in their entirety, from the public to the private sector.

- Core services are those professional activities that define the profession of librarianship. These include collection development and organization; gathering and providing information; making the collection accessible to all library users; providing assistance in use of the collection; and providing oversight and management of these activities.

It is acknowledged that the distinctions between the terms "outsourcing" and "privatization" are not exact and are subject to arbitrary interpretations. Within the context of this report, the Task Force has utilized the term "outsourcing" for contracting for specific services; and the term "privatization" when the responsibility for day-to-day management of a library or for establishing or altering policies that affect the delivery of service, is delegated to an external commercial agency.

#### LIBRARIES ARE AN AMERICAN VALUE

The value of libraries was clearly articulated in the statement of the late Arthur Curley, past president of ALA, entitled *Libraries: An American Value*; quoted at the beginning of this document.

The association's 21<sup>st</sup> Century intellectual freedom statement reinforces the constitutional rights of individuals of all ages to access the books, ideas, resources and information made available by America's libraries. It supports our nation's diversity, reflected through the provision of a full spectrum of resources and services. It embraces the role of libraries in connecting people and ideas, and guarantees each individual's privacy and confidentiality in using library resources and services, values that must be articulated, promulgated and communicated.

This study of outsourcing and privatization was undertaken within the context of these American values and the practices in the workplace of both the public and private sectors.

#### OUTSOURCING AND PRIVATIZATION IN THE GENERAL ECONOMY

In the last two decades, numerous major corporations have used outsourcing as a profit-making strategy. Such jargon as "less is more," "rightsizing" and "downsizing" express the corporate ethos of reducing costs associated with human resources.

In 1996, American companies, including such major firms as IBM, AT&T and M&M/Mars, spent over \$100 billion on outsourcing contracts. The total spent on outsourcing contracts in private industry is expected to reach \$160 billion by the end of 1998 and over \$300 billion by the end of 2001. Initially, businesses primarily outsourced functions not considered core competencies of their organization. The Outsourcing Institute reports that outsourcing now often includes skills considered central to many industries (Greco, 1997).

Federal policy in the early 1980s favored the commercial sector and promoted privatization of major government sectors. In 1983, the Office of Management and Budget issued the National Performance Review and Government Performance Review Act, which identified such federal institutions as prisons and libraries as commercial activities.

In the 1990s, corporations in the private sector have increasingly undertaken services previously provided by government agencies. Companies like Lockheed, formerly a defense contractor, are now bidding to run state and city welfare programs. Maximus, a company that contracts for numerous federal libraries, also runs a welfare eligibility program for the state of Connecticut. A recent survey of privatization in state government indicates increased privatization of government services over the past five years and predicts the trend will continue for the next five (Chi and Jasper, 1997). At the local level, such public services as transportation, hospitals, waste management and sewer systems rely increasingly on privatization.

Opponents of privatization fear that traditional public services will suffer if left to the forces of the marketplace. This concern is borne out by the ALA Washington Office's *Less Access to Less Information By and About the U.S. Government* which documents the results of federal privatization of library and information services: devaluation of professional librarians, increased public costs for information and shrinking public access to information by and about the United States government.

#### OUTSOURCING AND PRIVATIZATION WITHIN LIBRARIES

Although the term "outsourcing" may be somewhat new to the vocabulary of librarianship, its practice in libraries is not. The Brodart Company representative testified at the Task Force Meeting, 1998 ALA Midwinter, that the company had been involved in library outsourcing for over 60 years.

At the same hearings, testimony by librarians identified routine outsourcing uses, responding to specific needs:

- an immediate and/or short-term need beyond organization capabilities, e.g. an opening-day collection for a new library;
- operational activities not considered core librarian competencies, e.g. new-book binding, disaster response and maintenance service;
- insufficient staff expertise for small or short-term projects, e.g. cataloging maps, foreign language collections or unusual materials;
- cooperative purchasing within library consortia; and
- a response to temporary staff reductions.

Some rationales for outsourcing and privatization echo recent public discussions and controversies:

- effecting cost efficiencies and controls, reflecting a conclusion that an activity will be more cost-effective or produce a better product if performed by a third party;
- responses to political pressure from a governing authority where, as with federal libraries, outsourcing and privatization becomes unavoidable.

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Outsourcing of library services has been practiced as far back as 1828, when a Hartford, Connecticut bindery published books and sold them by subscription. A number of critical events in the 20<sup>th</sup> century have shaped outsourcing issues as we see them today: the provision of catalog cards by the Library of Congress (1901); the Greenaway Plan for blanket orders of new publications (1958); the outsourcing of federal libraries (1983); and the outsourcing of cataloging at Wright State University (1993). The outsourcing of collection development in the Hawaii public libraries (1996), and the privatization of library services at Riverside County (California) Free Library (1997) are recent events that have caused professional outcry.

In 1901, the Library of Congress began providing catalog cards on a cost recovery basis, enabling libraries to, in effect, outsource the cataloging of materials already handled by the Library of Congress. This service can be regarded as the precursor to various cooperative cataloging efforts, and to the formation of bibliographic utilities and other agencies from which cataloging can be purchased. The availability of networked bibliographic utilities further fostered the widespread practice of copy cataloging, in which minimal skill is required to attach holdings to records in such central databases as the Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) and Western Library Network (WLN).

The Greenaway Plan, initiated at the Philadelphia Free Library, was an approval plan through which librarians automatically received copies at the same time reviewers did, and selected those titles which met collection needs (see especially Bonk and McGrill, 1979, p. 16). The Greenaway Plan is notable in that it actually enhanced the professional nature of book selection, a key component of collection management, through commercializing a portion of library service—the receipt of review copies.

Privatization which places control, governance and potential profits in the for-profit sector is a relatively new phenomenon in libraries.

In 1983, the Office of Management and Budget concluded that federal library services qualified for privatization. The stated intent of Circular A-76 was to prevent government competition with private industry. Library operations were mingled with other office and administrative services under the definition of commercial activities (Office of Management and Budget, 1983). Classifying federal agency libraries as commercial services met with protests from the library community. In 1985, ALA passed a resolution focused on concerns about *diminution of professional skills*, that called the classification of library services as commercial activities “inaccurate and inappropriate” and “a major distortion of the nature and purpose of libraries.” Nevertheless, many federal library services were contracted to private companies, or effectively privatized. Recently, in the fall of 1998, the Department of Defense placed a moratorium on further contracting-out of general libraries; the Department of the Army placed a moratorium on contracting-out of all Army libraries.

When the National Technical Information Services (NTIS), an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, was targeted for privatization in 1986, ALA again passed a

resolution protesting this decision, expressing concerns that this action "adversely affect[s] equal and ready access to scientific and technical documentation." At that time the efforts of ALA and others were successful in avoiding privatization. Today the NTIS is a non-appropriated government agency, self-funded from the sale of products and services.

Another critical event was Wright State (Ohio) University's outsourcing of its entire cataloging operation in 1993. The cataloging department was dissolved and cataloging was contracted with OCLC. The library press closely followed the Wright State University outsourcing. A review of the *Library Literature* indicates that most articles in the traditional library press were favorable, although there is anecdotal evidence of contentious discussion which is not fully documented.

In 1996, the Hawaii State Library outsourced the selection and processing of Hawaii's public library collections to Baker & Taylor, a major library vendor. In Hawaii and throughout the nation, there was significant discussion and criticism of these activities, culminating in legislation passed by the Hawaii state legislature and signed into law by the Governor in June of 1997, affirming the role of local librarians in materials selection. Ultimately, the contract with Baker & Taylor was terminated and no similar contract has been pursued in that state.

In 1997, the Riverside County (California) Free Library privatized library services for all twenty-five of its branch libraries. The county awarded the contract to Library Systems and Services (LSSI), a company with a history of managing library contracts for special and federal libraries. This was the first documented instance of privatization of an entire public library system. Press reactions were cautiously observant; there was a notable lack of professional criticism. Calabasas, California, has followed Riverside County's example and outsourced its library services with LSSI; Jersey City, New Jersey, initially contracted with LSSI, but the contract was voided in October 1998 by court order, citing critical errors in the original decision-making process of the Library Board.

In 1998, a library board in Loudoun County, Virginia, was criticized in a legal opinion for delegating the deselection of the library's electronic resources available on the internet to a private company, through use of that company's filtering software package. In ruling that the board policy constituted unconstitutional "prior restraint," particularly with the lack of "sufficient standards" or "adequate procedural safeguards," the judge wrote:

"The degree to which the Policy is completely lacking in standards is demonstrated by the defendant's [the library board] willingness to entrust all preliminary blocking decisions—and, by default, the overwhelming majority of final decisions—to a private vendor..."

#### GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Governance becomes the critical issue in reviewing the impact of outsourcing and privatization on library services. The Outsourcing Task Force repeatedly returned to issues



## OUTSOURCING AND PRIVATIZATION IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES

Page 7

of governance and private versus public accountability. Comparisons of consortial and commercial services help illustrate this issue.

Consortial shared services, commercial services and networks share similar objectives and often perform similar tasks and functions. All provide library services that libraries may or may not perform themselves. All may manage employees delivering these services. All may function at sites geographically removed from the libraries they serve.

The locus of governance is one area where commercial services sharply diverge from not-for-profit shared services. Identifying the locus of governance involves determining to whom a concern is primarily answerable and ascertaining for whom employees work. Commercial services are non-democratic, while the governance of shared services is determined by the membership. The primary accountability for commercial services is to internal stakeholders or shareholders of the company, whose motives are commercial viability and profitability, not necessarily public service. There are, in some cases, different laws and applications of the law as applied to the public and private sectors. For instance, individual and public rights under the First Amendment are more readily upheld when the public sector and government action is involved.

There are great concerns that a commercial contract for total privatization of library operations in the public sector conflicts with the traditionally public nature of library governance. The Task Force believes it is critical that the governing body for the library retain its responsibility for establishing and maintaining policy and control of the product and services provided and for the policies that direct its activities.

Other important issues include the potential impact of outsourcing and privatization on "open meeting laws" and the public laws dealing with freedom of information and the confidentiality of records. Within the public sector, certain laws enable citizens to hold public agencies accountable in very specific ways. It is unclear how these laws would apply to the private sector activity for which a public agency has contracted.

### CORE LIBRARY SERVICES

One major issue is the concern about the complete outsourcing or privatization of library materials selection, cataloging, reference service and library management, all defined as core services in this document. These activities are taught in library and information science schools. They constitute the intellectual, abstract core of librarianship, which is part of the library education curriculum and their centrality to librarianship is reinforced by professional activity and policy. Many librarians believe that much of the essence of core services is taught and learned within library settings.

There are many routine applications for outsourcing in librarianship, and many uses for commercial services. Rarely do librarians question outsourcing or privatizing of activities not directly associated with librarianship. Indeed, librarians have traditionally employed other professionals to perform services related to librarianship that support core library services, e.g., preservation, conservation and automation.

When core services such as cooperative cataloging or consortial collection management are outsourced to not-for-profit agencies run by and for librarians, the nature of the work remains in-house — closely associated with and accountable to the libraries which benefit from the outsourced services.

To outsource an intellectual service suggests that it is a simple commodity that can be quantified, described in a written document, and contracted to the lowest bidder. Much of the important work of librarianship is abstract and non-quantifiable. The successful practice of librarianship is closely tied to the particular characteristics of the communities served.

When core services are outsourced, they may be conducted at sites geographically remote from the libraries they serve, by agencies with separate governance and with staff with limited opportunities for professional library associations. The peer relationship is lost, as are the opportunities for informal knowledge transfer, skill-sharing, and the many innovations that result from skilled practitioners observing their communities. Loss of these intimate connections threatens to erode the corporate body of library service.

#### HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

Of great concern is the impact of outsourcing and privatization on the quality and professional integrity of employees. Qualified professional library staff members are critical to developing and maintaining collections responsive to the needs of serviced populations and to providing access to information. Although personnel costs are often of great concern to administrators and elected officials, the library's ability to instruct, educate, inspire and stimulate individuals is priceless. A library manager's greatest challenge is maintaining a workforce that reflects the needs of the population served while operating within a defined budget.

Another personnel issue is the displacement of the individuals who once performed the outsourced functions. There is always a human cost associated with workforce reduction. This factor could contribute to larger profession-wide issues, impacting recruitment and retention.

Outsourcing and privatization raise other personnel supervision issues. When a servicing agency hires an individual to provide a contracted service, the local institution loses control over the function, the professional performance qualifications and the performer of that endeavor. The library may have a work standard that differs from that applied to employees hired by the outside contractor. These disparities could raise serious issues of equitable treatment and employee morale.

Pay and benefits are potential issues in any outsourcing and privatization scenario. When outsourcing, a library gives control of compensation to the service agency and can no longer guarantee equitable pay and benefits. When the primary rationale for outsourcing an activity is cost reduction, it is doubtful that salaries and benefits of the employees of the service agency remain a concern of the library.

Outsourcing and privatization also raise issues of maintaining a competent workforce profession-wide and ensuring that professional librarianship delivers promised services. Traditionally, vendors have provided quality service by hiring librarians trained in libraries, but as activities are increasingly outsourced, the number of librarians who have been trained in those activities within libraries decreases. For example, as more institutions send their materials to commercial companies for preservation, the individual libraries lose key information on preservation techniques and methods, as well as staff expertise on effective product evaluation. Vendor-employed catalogers who are professionally trained but have little or no experience with cataloging in a local setting have no opportunity to develop the kinds of insights into their work, its purposes and uses that catalogers at the local level have. These librarians are ill-equipped to take what they know about cataloging, catalog structure and user needs, and combine this knowledge for innovative practice, systems and service.

Librarians must understand what their core professional activities are and maintain channels for sharing knowledge in these areas with colleagues. The profession must ask who will provide the labor pool of qualified librarians if an increasing number of libraries outsource professional activities. The profession must be assured of adequate education of librarians performing activities for vendors, so that qualified librarians can complete tasks requiring judgment and decision-making both in and out of libraries. Librarians must protect standards of education, training and professional advancement.

#### MANAGEMENT AND LONG-RANGE PLANNING ISSUES FOR LIBRARIES CONSIDERING OUTSOURCING

Despite professional concerns, outsourcing of some core services has become an increasingly prevalent management practice. Its widespread use calls for guidance within the profession on whether to outsource and how to insure quality control of outsourced activities. This is not to suggest that insuring a quality product can resolve all outsourcing issues; the concerns raised above demonstrate that some problems related to outsourcing are inherent in the practice regardless of the nature of the contract. However, outsourcing has been a practice for all types of libraries, and guidance for current practice is necessary.

Before deciding to outsource any activity or service, decision-makers must determine whether outsourcing will, indeed, reduce costs and maintain or improve the quality of services. If so, is it the best way to improve productivity and service delivery? Decision-makers also must determine how they will maintain effective control over outsourced services and functions. With respect to human resources, libraries must weigh the effect of outsourcing on accountability, diversity, goals and morale.

Outsourcing decisions must be made within the context of the planning process for individual libraries, which mandates a clearly articulated mission and objectives aimed at accomplishing this mission. With its mission and objectives in hand, a library can assess what impact potential outsourcing would have on service delivery. Standards of service, quality control, and accountability for the outsourced activity must be established.

Finally, evaluation of outsourcing activities is essential and should include both quantitative and qualitative measurements. Most current literature measures the impact of

outsourcing in total dollar benefits to the organization, but the impact on information services delivery is usually under-emphasized or poorly documented. The impact on other less intangible matters, such as morale, the development of a trained workforce and obligations to cooperative partners is addressed even less effectively. Not all benefits or problems can be calculated in monetary terms. The California Library Association's resolution on outsourcing recognizes this and states, "The primary measure of service benefit must be effectiveness in meeting the needs of library users"(California Library Association, 1998).

There are assertions that the private sector can perform library and information jobs less expensively. However, even if this were true, absolute dollar savings are not a sufficient and adequate measure of library services. Historically, and by the definition, public goods are "market failures" that are essential public services, but are not profitable enough for the marketplace to support. Planning documents central to our profession, such as *Planning and Role Setting*, ignore the profitability concept entirely and focus on delivery of information services to the public (McClure, 1987).

#### CONFLUENCE WITH PROFESSIONAL GOALS

In its Goal 2000 planning effort, the American Library Association has identified five key action areas for librarianship: diversity, education and continuous learning, equity of access, intellectual freedom, and 21<sup>st</sup> century literacy.

Diversity—ALA states, "Diversity is a fundamental value of the association and its members, and is reflected in its commitment to recruiting people of color to the profession and to the promotion and development of library collections and services for all people."

If a library outsources or privatizes its operations, the impact on its human resources policies regarding diversity and gender must be considered. If a public or academic library has stringent affirmative action guidelines for hiring and promoting, with the goal of creating a more diverse workforce, what happens to these guidelines when a library function or department is outsourced? Does the library investigate the affirmative action policies of the company that now performs the work? Do the same protective legal mechanisms apply in both arenas?

ALA recently began several initiatives aimed at increasing diversity within the profession. A key component of some of these initiatives is mentoring—in particular, encouraging minority support staff to consider librarianship as a career. If outsourcing leads to contracting out of library work previously performed by library support staff, opportunities for recruitment and to receive mentoring may disappear.

Education and Continuous Learning—ALA states, "The association provides opportunities for the professional development and education of librarians, library staff and trustees; it promotes continuous, lifelong learning for all people through library and information services of all types."

It is debatable whether libraries can hold vendors to in-house standards of professional development. Ultimately commercial enterprises, with their profit-making goals, could be at odds with the service-based goals of librarianship—a conflict that may be impossible to address through statements of work, directing performance and product requirements.

Equity of Access—The ALA position is that, “the association advocates funding and policies that support libraries as a great democratic institution, serving people of all ages, income level, location or ethnicity, and providing the full range of information resources needed to live, learn, govern and work.”

Among issues that this position raises is what is the motivation for a commercial enterprise managing a public library to build libraries where they are needed, rather than where they are profitable? Will companies that own several businesses, including library contracts, be willing to lobby for funding and legislation not favorable to the other businesses? For example, a company owning a database service and servicing a library contract may not be willing to support federal copyright legislation or other legislation that favor fair use and public access policies.

Intellectual Freedom—ALA states, “Intellectual freedom is a basic right in a democratic society and a core value of the library profession. The American Library Association actively defends the right of library users to read, seek information, and speak freely as guaranteed by the First Amendment.”

If the locus of control for some or all library operations moves to the commercial sector, the professional commitment to intellectual freedom may be compromised or subject to great pressure. For example, a librarian employed by a corporation may have an ethical obligation to uphold the Library Bill of Rights, but enjoys no legal protection under the First Amendment when resisting censorship by an employer. A private company anxious to renew its contract might be more willing to relax its enforcement of the Library Bill of Rights if this avoids controversy and possible non-renewal of contracts. If a book or other material is challenged, professional commitments to intellectual freedom may conflict with a company's profit-making goals. Who will make the final decision about whether the material is retained or removed?

Local decision-makers may not be able to legally ensure that the company supports the library's commitment to free speech. Decision-makers must assess whether they wish to, and are legally able to, direct third party contractors to lobby for legislation supporting the principles of intellectual freedom. In both areas, legal opinion will be required.

21<sup>st</sup> Century Literacy—ALA states, “The American Library Association assists and promotes libraries in helping children and adults develop the skills they need—whether the ability to read or use computers—understanding that the ability to seek and effectively utilize information resources (information literacy) is essential in a global information society.”

Local decision-makers must develop mechanisms that direct private companies to be sensitive to, and supportive of, these literacy goals. In addition, channels through which

private companies can respond to and support new goals, as they are developed by ALA, must be created.

### CONCLUSION

The ALA Outsourcing Task Force presents to the Association recommendations for action as stated at the beginning of this report.

The Outsourcing Task Force also recognizes that an Association task force cannot of itself determine local action, and that guidance to libraries considering or practicing outsourcing or privatization is critical and must be provided by the Association.

The Task Force also sees a responsibility for stimulating professional discussion of outsourcing and privatization throughout the profession and urges that such discussion continue in the context of the effective provision of quality library services.

June 10, 1998

## REVIEW OF ALA POLICIES AND POSITION STATEMENTS

The ALA Outsourcing Task Force was charged with reviewing ALA policies as they relate to outsourcing in libraries. Since ALA is concerned with the provision of quality library services and since outsourcing, contracting, and privatization are methods utilized to provide these services, potentially all ALA policies have at least a tangential impact.

### I. ALA MISSION STATEMENT

"The mission of the American Library Association is to provide leadership for the development, promotion, and improvement of library and information services and the provisions of librarianship in order to enhance learning and ensure access to information for all" (ALA Policy Manual 1.2 – Mission).

### II. ALA STANDARDS FOR LIBRARY SERVICES

A review of ALA policies gives strong evidence that the library profession is critically concerned with the quality of the library product provided for its respective "publics." The quality of the library product provided in the different types of libraries is dependent on a variety of components. The review of available policies highlight substantive standards to evaluate this library product becomes evident within the discussion of outsourcing and contracting for library services; and the critical need to develop such standards.

ALA Policy 55 "Standards and Guidelines" provides for the adoption of standards and guidelines of library services by ALA and its divisions or units. Under Policies 55.1, 55.2, 55.3, ALA divisions have authority to develop standards; units, other than divisions, submit standards to the appropriate ALA Committee before they are presented to Council for approval.

However, while there are guidelines for library staff in making internal management decisions, there is a notable lack of ALA policies which set viable standards and provide strong leadership to decision makers — be they trustees, school boards, library boards, board of governors, federal, state, or municipal officials, etc. — on methods and standards for excellence which can be used to evaluate the library product they have the responsibility for providing.

A review of policies indicates that there are only six standards available — and only for academic libraries and libraries serving special constituencies — which can serve decision makers as vital tools for evaluating the library product provided:

Association of College and Research Libraries. "Standards for College Libraries." *College and Research Libraries News* (September 1989).

Association of College and Research Libraries for Educational Communication and Technology. "Standards for Community, Junior, and Technical College Learning Resource Programs." *College & Research Librarian News*" (October 1994).

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Office of Management and Budget (1983). *Performance of Commercial Activities*. Available: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/OMB/html/circulars/a076/a076.html>.

"Private Practices: A Review of Privatization in State Government." Executive Summary, by Keon S. Chi and Cindy Jasper. The Council on State Governments, 1997.



Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. *Revised Standards and Guidelines for Services for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Physically Handicapped*. Chicago: ASCLA, 1995.

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. *Library Standards for Jails and Detention Facilities*, Chicago: ASCLA, 1981.

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. *Standards and Guidelines for Client Library Services and Residential Mental Health Facilities*. Chicago: ASCLA, 1987.

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. *Standards for Libraries at Institutions for the Mentally Retarded*. Chicago: ASCLA, 1981.

### III. PRIORITY AREAS AND GOALS ESTABLISHED BY ALA

Since forms of outsourcing and contracting are often integral to the provision of library services, many ALA policies impact these concepts, in addition to the published standards cited above.

ALA Policy 1.3 sets "Priority Areas and Goals" to be achieved within the current five-year planning cycle of the organization. Four of these six priority areas relate to outsourcing or contracting for library services — *Access to Information; Intellectual Freedom; Personnel Resources; and Library Services, Development, and Technology*. Relevant ALA policies, which amplify these four identified areas as they relate to outsourcing and contracting, are indicated.

#### PRIORITY AREA A – ACCESS TO INFORMATION

"ALA will promote efforts to ensure that every individual has access to needed information at the time needed and in a format the individual can utilize through provisions of library and information services." Goals one, three and seven of this priority area state:

1. All individuals have equal access to libraries and information services . . .
3. Government information is widely and easily available . . .
7. Fees are not a barrier to library access and service."

#### POLICY 50.3 – FREE ACCESS TO INFORMATION

"The American Library Association asserts that the charging of fees and levies for information services, including those services utilizing the latest information technology, is discriminatory in publicly supported institutions providing library and information services."

#### POLICY 50.4 – BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATABASES

"The American Library Association supports open access to information including the information contained in online databases."

POLICY 51 – SECTION 2 – ACCESS TO INFORMATION

"Public Access to Federal Information – ALA supports equal, ready and equitable access to information collected, compiled, produced, funded, and/or disseminated by the government of the United States . . . access to government information is a public right and a principal function and goal of the federal government . . .

Equal Access to Library Services – ALA is committed to the provision of access to libraries for people who are disadvantaged by reason of cultural, educational, or economic factors or lack of mobility."

POLICY 51 – SECTION 5 – FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Federal Libraries: – A National Resource – "Library of Congress – Crucial national library services performed by the Library of Congress include provisions of bibliographic records, databases, and related products and services upon which libraries nationwide depend . . .

Federal Libraries – The contracting out or privatizing of entire federal libraries and information centers jeopardize the integrity of their resources and the quality of their services. The inherently governmental nature of these libraries and information centers; their close association with the policy-making structures of their parent organizations; their functions as an institutional memory of federal agency goals, missions and programs; and their potential role in a nationwide information network demonstrate clearly why they are not commercial activities . . . Because of the sensitivity of certain types of information available in federal libraries and the impartiality required to provide information to government decision makers, it is not in the best interest of the American people to contract out federal information programs and organizations to foreign owned or controlled firms or to for-profit organizations."

POLICY 52.4 – CONFIDENTIALITY OF LIBRARY RECORDS

"The ethical responsibilities of librarians, as well as statutes in most states and the District of Columbia, protect the privacy of library users. Confidentiality extends to 'information sought or received and materials consulted, borrowed, acquired,' and includes database search records, interlibrary loan records, and other personally identified uses of library materials, facilities, or services."

POLICY 54.16 – ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

"Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict. The American Library Association Code of Ethics states the values to which we are committed and embodies the ethical responsibilities of the profession in this changing environment . . . The principles of this Code are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical decision making.

1. We provide the highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests . . .

## OUTSOURCING AND PRIVATIZATION IN AMERICAN LIBRARIES

Page 17

3. We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted . . .
7. We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources."

POLICY 55 – STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

In addition to the standards cited above, ALA units have prepared the following guidelines in accordance with these policies:

ALA Intellectual Freedom Committee. "Guidelines for the Development and Implementation of Policies, Regulations and Procedures Affecting Access to Library Materials, Services and Facilities." Chicago: ALA Office of Intellectual Freedom, 1994.

ALA with Society of Americans; Archivist Joint Committee on Library; Archive Relationships; "ALA-SAA Joint Statement on Access to Original Research Materials," *College and Research Libraries News* (December 1993).

American Association of School Librarians – "AASL Statement on Confidentiality of Library Records," *Information Power: Guidelines for School Media Programs*. Chicago: ALA, 1988.

American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Power: Guidelines for School media Programs*, Chicago: ALA, 1988.

Association of College and Research Libraries. "Guidelines for the Preparation of Policies on Library Access." *College and Research Libraries News* (December 1992).

Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies. *Guidelines for Library and Information Services for the American Deaf Community*, Chicago: ASCLA, 1996.

Reference and Adult Services Division. "Guidelines for Medical, Legal, and Business Responses at a General Reference Desk." *RQ* (summer 1992).

Reference and Adult Services Division. "Information Services for Information Consumers: Guidelines for Providers." *RQ* (winter 1990).

Social Responsibilities Round Table. Alternatives in Print Task Force, "Mission Statement," <http://www.jessamyn.com/srrt/taskforce.html>.

Young Adult Library Services Association – YALSA Directions for Library Services to Young Adults Revision Task Force. *Directions for Library Service to Young Adults*. 2d. ed. Chicago: ALA, 1993.

#### POLICY 60 – MINORITY CONCERNS

"The American Library Association promotes equal access to information to all persons and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing racial and ethnic diversity among Americans."

#### POLICY 60.3 – GOALS FOR INDIAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

"The American Library Association and the Native American Education Association supports guidelines designed to meet the informational needs and to purvey and promote the rich cultural heritage of American Indians."

#### POLICY 60.6 – LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES TO ASIAN AMERICANS

"The American Library Association urges libraries serving Asian Americans to commit themselves to ... Asian language materials ... English language materials and programs that promote an understanding of Asian culture among English speaking Americans..."

#### POLICY 61 – LIBRARY SERVICES TO THE POOR

"The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons, and recognizes that urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults and families in America."

### PRIORITY AREA C – INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

"ALA will promote the protection of library materials, personnel and trustees from censorship, the defense of library personnel and trustees in support of intellectual freedom and the Library Bill of Rights, and the education of library personnel, trustees, and the general public to the importance of intellectual freedom."

#### POLICY 51 – FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE POLICY – SECTION 3 – INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

"... ALA supports the rights of librarians and information centers to disseminate materials on all topics of concern, no matter how controversial.

ALA rejects discrimination in library service and upholds the right of all persons to have access to library services, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, national origin, disability, economic condition, individual life style, or political or social views."

#### POLICY 52.3.3 – LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

"The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.
2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.
3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.
4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.
5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.
6. Libraries which make exhibits spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use."

#### POLICY 54.16 -- PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

- "2. Uphold the principles of intellectual freedom and resists all efforts to censor library resources . . .
4. Recognize and respect intellectual property rights . . .
  6. Do not advance private interests at expense of library users, colleagues, at our employing institutions."

#### POLICY 55 -- STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Guidelines prepared by ALA units in accordance with ALA Policy 55.3:

American Association of School Librarians. Helmer, Dona J., comp. and ed. *Selecting Materials for School Library Media Centers*, 2d ed. Chicago: AASL, 1993.

Association of Library Collections and Technical Services. Guidelines for ALCTS members to supplement the American Library Association Code of Ethics:

"Within the context of the institution's mission and programs and the needs of the user populations served by the library an ALCTS member:

1. strives to develop a collection of materials within collection policies and priorities;
2. strives to provide broad and unbiased access to information;
3. strives to preserve and conserve the materials in the library in accordance with established priorities and programs;
4. develops resource sharing programs to extend and enhance the information sources available to library users;
5. promotes the development and application of standards and professional guidelines;

6. establishes a secure and safe environment for staff and users;
7. fosters and promotes fair, ethical and legal trade and business practices;
8. maintains equitable treatment and confidentiality in competitive relations and manuscript and grant reviews;
9. supports and abides by any contractual agreements made by the library or its home institution in regard to the provision of or access to information resources, acquisition of services, and financial arrangements."

Association of Library Collections and Technical Services, Acquisitions Section. "Statement on Principles and Standards of Acquisitions Practice. In all acquisitions transactions, a librarian:

1. gives first consideration to the objectives and policies of his or her institution;
2. strives to obtain the maximum ultimate value of each dollar of expenditure;
3. grants all competing vendors equal consideration insofar as the established policies of his or her library permit, and regards each transaction on its own merits;
4. subscribes to and works for honesty, truth, and fairness in buying and selling, and denounces all forms and manifestations of bribery;
5. declines personal gifts and gratuities;
6. uses only by consent original ideas and designs devised by one vendor for competitive purchasing purposes;
7. accords a prompt and courteous reception insofar as conditions permit to all who call on legitimate business missions;
8. fosters and promotes fair, ethical, and legal trade practices;
9. avoids sharp practice;
10. strives consistently for knowledge of the publishing and bookselling industry;
11. strives to establish practical and efficient methods for the conduct of his/her office;
12. counsels and assists fellow acquisitions librarians in the performance of their duties, whenever occasion permits."

Reference and Adult Services Division. "Guidelines for Establishing Local History Collections." RQ (fall 1993).

Reference and Adult Services Division. "Guidelines for Preservation, Conservation, and Restoration of Local History and Local Genealogical Materials." RQ (spring 1993).

Formal Actions Taken by the Board of Directors of ALA Divisions

American Library Trustee Association. ALTA voted: "to reaffirm the selection of materials as an important responsibility of the professional librarian and therefore decry the Hawaii State Library decision to outsource selection of materials." June 1997.

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. Resolution prepared and forwarded to the ALA Outsourcing Task Force "for information," January 1998. Resolution was not forwarded to the ALA Council for action.

"A Tribute to Hawaii's Librarians"

WHEREAS significant changes were made in materials selection and processing practices for the State of Hawaii's public libraries, and

WHEREAS these changes affected the quality of service that Hawaii's public librarians were able to give their users, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED THAT ALCTS applaud the success of Hawaii's public librarians in addressing the needs of their constituencies as they were affected by the outsourcing of materials selection and processing, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT ALCTS applaud the success of Hawaii's public librarians in bringing these issues to the attention of the broader library community and the Hawaiian legislature.

"Responsible Management, Responsible Outsourcing"

WHEREAS librarians have the responsibility for operations in their libraries, such as the selection and organization of library materials, and WHEREAS responsible management of library resources may entail the outsourcing of such operations, and

WHEREAS the outsourcing of library operations is a long-accepted method of accomplishing library work, and

WHEREAS such outsourcing is most effective when there is a well-written contract that reflects the needs of the library, the vendor, and the library staff and users, and

WHEREAS a decision to outsource is best taken when all concerned library staff and management have an opportunity to evaluate the service offered, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the American Library Association urge that appropriate care be taken in the negotiation and execution of contracts for outsourcing of library work of any kind.

"Application of Outsourcing to Materials Selection"

WHEREAS the selection, acquisition, and provision of materials that meet a library's users' needs is a prime/critical library function, and

WHEREAS such activities are best accomplished when local librarians are substantially involved in developing policies and procedures, and participating in processes that assure that such materials are acquired and made available to users, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the American Library Association urge that appropriate care be taken in the negotiation and execution of contracts for outsourcing of materials selection or library work of any kind.

Publications by ALA Divisions

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. *Outsourcing Library Technical Services Operations*, by Marylou Culver and Karen A. Wilson. 1997.

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. *Guide to Managing Approval Plans, Forthcoming*. (Acquisitions Guidelines, no. 11).

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. *Guide to Performance Evaluation of Library Materials Vendors*, 1988. (Acquisitions Guidelines, no. 5).

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. *Guide to Performance Evaluation of Serials Vendors*, 1997. (Acquisitions Guidelines, no. 10).

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. *Guidelines for Handling Library Orders for Serials and Periodicals*, Rev. Ed. 1992. (Acquisitions Guidelines, no. 7).

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. *Guide for Training Collection Management and Development Librarians*, ed. By Susan L. Fales. 1996. (Collection Management and Development Guides, no. 8).

Association for Library Collections and Technical Services. *Guide for Written Collection Policy Statements*, 2d ed, ed. By Joanne S. Anderson. 1996. (Collection Management and Development Guides, no. 7).

PRIORITY AREA E – PERSONNEL RESOURCES

"ALA will promote the recruitment, education, professional development, rights, interest and obligations of library personnel and trustees . . .

3. Librarians and all other library personnel are paid equitable and attractive salaries . . .
4. Librarians have a variety of opportunities for professional development and continuing education . . .
9. Librarians uphold the ALA Code of Ethics . . .
10. Librarians are proactive professionals who ensure the free flow of information and ideas."

POLICY 54.1 – LIBRARY EDUCATION AND PERSONNEL UTILIZATION

"To meet the goals of library service, both professional and supportive staff are needed in libraries . . . The title of 'librarian' carries with it the connotation of 'professional' in the sense that professional tasks are those which require a special background and education."



POLICY 54.3 – EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

"The ALA is committed to equality of opportunity for all library employees or applicants for employment, regardless of race, color, creed, sex, age, physical or mental hardship, individual life style or national origin . . ."

POLICY 54.3.1 – AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PLANS

"Member libraries and library schools with 15 or more staff shall formulate written affirmative action plans and shall submit these plans to OLPR for review."

POLICY 54.4 – COMPARABLE REWARDS

"The ALA supports salary administration which give reasonable and comparable recognition to positions having administrative, technical, subject and linguistic requirements."

POLICY 54.5 – FACULTY STATUS OF COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY LIBRARIANS

"The intellectual contributions made by academic librarians to the teaching, research, and service mission of their colleges and universities merit the granting of faculty status. Faculty status for librarians should entail the same rights and responsibilities granted to and required of other members of the faculty."

POLICY 54.6 – FAIR EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES IN LIBRARIES AND AMONG SUPPLIERS TO LIBRARIES

"The American Librarian Association Council instructs the Library Administration and Management Association to:

1. Guide libraries in the process of soliciting fair employment practice information from suppliers.
2. Advise libraries on the enforcement of fair employment practice laws in their employment practices and policies . . ."

POLICY 54.7 – SECURITY OF EMPLOYMENT FOR LIBRARY EMPLOYEES

"Security of employment means that, following the satisfactory completion of a probationary period, the employment of a library employee under permanent appointment carries with it an institutional commitment to continuous employment . . ."

POLICY 54.8 – THE LIBRARY'S PAY PLAN

"Libraries should have a well constructed and well administered pay plan based on systematic analysis and evaluation of jobs in the library and which will assure equal pay for equal work."

POLICY 54.9 – PERMANENT PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

"The right to earn a living includes a right to part-time employment on a par with full-time employment, including prorated pay and fringe benefits, opportunity for advancement and protection of tenure, access to middle and upper-level jobs, and exercise of full responsibilities at any level . . ."

POLICY 54.10 – EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND SALARIES

"The American Library Association supports and works for the achievement of equal salaries and opportunity for employment and promotion for men and women . . ."

POLICY 54.16 – ON PROFESSIONAL ETHICS

5. We treat co-workers and other colleagues with respect, fairness, and good faith, and advocate conditions of employment that safeguard the rights and welfare of all employees of our institutions . . .
8. We strive for excellence in the profession by maintaining and enhancing our own knowledge and skills, by encouraging the professional development of co-workers, and by fostering the aspirations of potential members of the profession."

POLICY 55 – STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Standards and Guidelines developed in accordance with ALA Policies 55 – 55.3:

American Association of School Librarians. "Position Statement on Appropriate Staffing for School Library Media Centers. *In Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*. Chicago: ALA, 1988.

Association of College & Research Libraries. "Guidelines for Academic Status for College and University Libraries." *College and Research Libraries News* (March 1990).

Association of College & Research Libraries. "Guideline on Collective Bargaining." Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries (March 1993).

Association of College & Research Libraries. "Model Statement Criteria and Procedures for Appointment, Promotion in Academic Rank, and Tenure for College and University Librarians." *College and Research Libraries News* (May 1987).

Association of College & Research Libraries. "Standards for Faculty Status for College and University Librarians." *College and Research Libraries News* (May 1992).

Association of College & Research Libraries. "Statement of the Certification and Licensing of Academic Librarians." *College and Research Libraries News* (November 1989).

Association of College & Research Libraries/American Association of University Professors/Association of American Colleges. "Joint Statement on Faculty Status of College and University Librarians." *College and Research Libraries News* (February 1974).

Office for Library Personnel Resources. "Library Education and Personnel Utilization: A Statement of Policy." (Adopted by ALA Council, June 30, 1970. Revised 1976.) Chicago: ALA Office for Library Personnel Resources, 1976.

American Association of School Librarians. "Position Statement on Appropriate Staffing for School Library Media Centers." Chicago: American Association of School Librarians, 1991.

American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology. *Information Power: Guidelines for School Library Media Programs*. Chicago: ALA, 1988.

#### POLICY 60.2 – COMBATING PREJUDICE, STEREOTYPING, AND DISCRIMINATION

"The American Library Association actively commits its prestige and resources to a coordinated action program that will combat prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination against individuals and groups in the library profession and in library service because of race, sex, creed, color, or national origin."

#### POLICY 60.5 – ETHNIC AND CULTURAL MINORITIES IN STATE, MUNICIPAL, AND COUNTY AGENCIES

"The American Library Association urges and supports the recruiting, hiring, and promotion of ethnic and cultural minorities within the state, municipal, and county library structure . . ."

#### PRIORITY AREA F – LIBRARY SERVICES DEVELOPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

9. Library funds are managed effectively . . .
11. Libraries are proactive agencies which meet challenges of social, economic, and environmental change."

#### POLICY 55 – STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Guidelines developed in accordance with these ALA Policies:

McClure, Charles, R., Amy Owen, Douglas L. Zweizig, Mary Jo Lynch and Nancy A. Van House. *Planning and Role Setting for Public Libraries: A Manual of Options and Procedures*. Chicago: ALA, 1987.

Van House, Nancy A., Mary Jo Lynch, Charles R. McClure, Douglas, L. Zweizig and Eleanor J. Rodger. *Output Measures for Public Libraries: A Manual of Standardized Procedures*. 2d ed. Chicago: ALA, 1987.

Walter, Virginia. *Output Measures and More: Planning and Evaluating of Public Library Services for Young Adults*. Chicago: ALA, 1995.

Walter, Virginia. *Output Measures for Public Library Service to Children: A Manual of Standardized Procedures*. Chicago: ALA, 1992.

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