**OLA Task Force on Access to Legal Information**

Meeting 3

Monday  November 26

**Present :** MaryKay Dahlgreen, Cathryn Bowie, Martha Renick, Holly Gerber, Diana Hadley, Sara Charlton, LaJean Humphries, Kelly Reynolds, Janet Webster, Mike Eliason, Alex Cuyler

**After introductions,** we recapped the task and our approach to date. Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager, joined us at the invitation of Mike.

**Review of Resources needed**

Cathryn has contacted vendors for pricing on the basic as well a expanded electronic resources. She will summarize the list of vendors and their products, and distribute to the Task Force. The list includes Lexis. WestLaw, Nolo Barbooks and more. A rough estimate of cost for licensing to a single location within each of the 36 counties would be no more than $350,000. This would be for unlimited access at the designated location. The question of remote access is pending. [Janet spoke with Terry Reese on November 27 about geolocating through the Libraries of Oregon portal. He says that this is possible if we can identify subnets for each location.] Cathryn pointed out that this is a good time to be negotiating and that many of these vendors are working with other states on similar packages. LaJean and Holy agreed that the list of possible resources was very solid and went beyond basic. We share concern with access to the electronic resources. The placement of terminals and the number in each location are critical decision points and need to be well described in license agreements.

Martha had been tasked with identifying costs for additional print resources. This is highly variable depending on the existing local collection and the particular needs of the county and its audience. She will pull together what the county law libraries are currently spending on electronic resources. This will be used to demonstrate the cost savings of consolidated purchasing.

**Draft Legislation and Various Options**

Martha shared her take on the regional cluster idea and distributed spreadsheets that broke down the existing counties by staff and unstaffed as another way of looking at strengths and weaknesses. She suggested 95% of the funds be directed to the counties that have staffed law libraries for continued operations.  The funds distributed to these counties should be dedicated for the purpose of operating a law library.  The remaining 5% would be distributed to the State of Oregon Law Library for managing and providing legal information services in the under-served and/or unstaffed counties.  Statewide database licensing would be centralized and other functions should be considered as well. The counties in the first group would work on the following:  create a shared database/union catalog of materials held, examine duplication and reduce where possible and practical, create standards and guidelines for service, cooperate in sharing resources, and strengthen regional partnerships among counties and partnerships with related entities, for example legal aid and public libraries. Martha suggested that the best approach at this point in time would be a budget note appointing a working group on county law libraries.

Laura Orr from Washington County Law Library had sent her proposal to Holly, Martha and Diana. Janet shared it with the Task Force. This proposal suggests a two phase approach. Phase 1 calls for creation of service through the State law Library for counties with unstaffed law libraries. Phase 2 would have the State Law Library work with the other county law libraries on consolidated purchasing, a union catalog , training and other functions. This assumes funding of up to $7.4 million as currently appropriated.

Janet shared the draft from Legislative Counsel that she, Nan Heim and Amy Goodall had requested. This is based on very rough ideas generated in September prior to the deadline for submission. The concepts here are to broaden what type of library could be considered a location for access to legal information, fund consolidated licensing of resources, provide for training and allow per capita grants to designated libraries. The draft can be amended, but December 21 is the final date for submitting. There is a danger in submitting as is in that a legislator may like it and advocate for the existing language when OLA really wants to change the approach. The reality is that there are legislators who have county law libraries on their radar and are expecting a change. The state economy is such that both the state and the counties will be looking at funding sources and commitments with a sharp pencil. We cannot assume that county law libraries will have $7.4 million for the next biennium.

We then had a good discussion about strengths and weaknesses of the proposals. There was agreement around the following concepts:

* Cast the proposed legislation as “Redefining County Law Libraries Services.”
* Provide a mechanism and funding for consolidated purchasing as a means to reduce collection expenses and broaden access.
* Provide a transition from the existing system to a new approach.
* Collaborate with interested and effected parties including the Bar, family law centers, court administrators and county administrators [Anyone else?]
* Consider access locations other the county courthouse.
* Provides options for counties.
* Dedicate funding to legal information and law libraries.

**Next Steps:**

Draft legislation can be amended until December 21. We agreed that this would be a difficult deadline to meet. Mike reminded us that legislation can get tweaked and significantly altered during its path through the Legislature. We run a risk of introducing legislation that we want to change significantly as a legislator may like it and not want changes. On the other hand, there are legislators looking very hard at county law libraries and others who will look at any places where there may be cost savings. To be successful during the session, we will need to have the five large counties (Multnomah, Clackamas, Washington, Marion and Lane) be in agreement about the approach.

With the above in mind, we agreed to have a working group revise the draft legislation by incorporating ideas from the Orr proposal and other ideas raised throughout our discussion. Holly, Cathryn and Martha will take this on with Janet as a facilitator. Mike and Alex agreed to be resources for comments. The group will have a draft to the Task Force by December 12 so it can be commented on and then forwarded to the OLA Library Development and Legislation Committee who meet on December 17 (State Library B9, 10-12).