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Progress Report



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The Library, Archives, and Information Program Has Improved Primary Functions

at a glance

In response to our 1999 report, the Department of State's Library, Archives, and Information Program has improved all of its primary functions.

- The Bureau of Library Development has improved grantees' accountability for state grant funds by strengthening the grant review process and reinforcing grantee reporting requirements. The bureau has also used an outcome measurement manual and held numerous training sessions to encourage local libraries to develop outcome measures. Finally, the bureau narrowed the scope of its services to seven priority specialty areas.
- The Bureau of Library and Network Services has taken steps to improve its collection development process, including increasing contact with state agency staff responsible for agency resource needs and electronically tracking the resource requests of state employees. However, the bureau has determined that it is not feasible to request and review collection catalogues from all state agencies.
- The Bureau of Archives and Records Management has improved the efficiency

and economy of its records management program by initiating legislation to eliminate its review and approval of state agency final records destruction requests. The bureau has also adopted a more proactive stance toward obtaining documents of historical value from state agencies. However, the bureau has chosen to test the effectiveness of current law before requesting clarification or strengthening of their authority to obtain such records.

Purpose _____

In accordance with state law, this progress report informs the Legislature of actions taken by the Department of State in response to a 1999 OPPAGA report.^{1,2} This report presents our assessment of the extent to which the department has addressed the findings and recommendations included in our report.

Background _____

The intent of the Department of State's Library, Archives, and Information Program

¹ Section 11.45(7)(f), *F.S.*

² *Justification Review of the Library, Archives, and Information Program within the Department of State, Report No. 99-05*, August 1999.

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is to perform services and activities that support the development of library service to state government, to the libraries and library profession of the state, and to the citizens of Florida. The program administers federal and state grants and provides aid and assistance to public libraries, archival and records management services for government agencies, and reference and information services for state agencies, other libraries, and the general public. Exhibit 1 identifies the primary functions of the program and the three bureaus responsible for those functions.

Exhibit 1 The Program Has Three Bureaus That Perform Seven Main Functions

Bureau	Primary Functions
Library Development	<p>Grants Administration. Administers federal and state grants to supplement local funding for the establishment, construction, and operation of local public libraries</p> <p>Consultation Services. Provides aid and assistance in the development of public libraries and stimulates statewide cooperation among libraries of all types</p>
Library and Network Services	<p>State Library. Operates the State Library of Florida which provides reference and information services for state agencies, other libraries, and the general public</p> <p>Florida Collection. Preserves maps, books, and manuscripts that have permanent or long-term historical or research value about the people and historical events of the state of Florida</p> <p>Network Services. Provides an interlibrary loan program and public information on Florida government (The Florida Government Information Locator Service)</p>
Archives and Records Management	<p>Records Management. Provides technical assistance to state, county, and local governments on records management and preservation</p> <p>State Archives. Preserves public records that have permanent or long-term historical or research value about Florida state government and maintains Florida's archives</p>

Source: Compiled by OPPAGA.

The Library, Archives, and Information Program is funded through general revenue and several trust funds that receive funding from both state and federal sources. The program was appropriated \$54.85 million and 120 FTE positions for Fiscal Year 2000-01. General revenue appropriations amounted to \$45.64 million and appropriations from trust funds totaled \$9.21 million. Most of the program's funds are used for grant awards; for Fiscal Year 2000-01, the program awarded \$46.16 million in state and federal grants to local public libraries.

Prior Findings

Our prior report identified several concerns specific to the program's functional areas.

Library development

The Bureau of Library Development's award of federal and state grants to local libraries in all of the state's 67 counties has improved the quality and accessibility of library services throughout the state. However, we found that the bureau was not effectively monitoring libraries' use of state grant funds. Specifically, it was not requiring state grant fund recipients to provide a complete and accurate accounting of grant expenditures. Moreover, the bureau was not requiring state grant-receiving libraries to develop outcome measures to demonstrate what was being accomplished with grant funds.

Although we identified several examples of the positive effect of one of the bureau's consultation activities (e.g., identifying and developing opportunities to enhance funding at the local level), the bureau was unable to demonstrate the overall effectiveness of its library consultation services. In particular, the bureau lacked indicators that allowed it to demonstrate that its consultation services were being delivered efficiently and effectively and

lacked standard methods of documenting and tracking consultation services. In addition, the bureau staff were providing consultation in a large number of specialty areas, which may have prevented the most efficient use of limited staff resources.

To ensure that the program can completely and accurately report to the Legislature on the use and impact of state grant funds, we recommended that the bureau more carefully monitor libraries' use of state grants by requiring a detailed accounting of grant expenditures. We also recommended that the bureau continue its efforts to assist local libraries in developing outcome measures that demonstrate what is being accomplished with state grant funds.

To ensure that the program is efficiently and effectively providing quality consultation services, we recommended that the bureau develop standard methods of tracking, documenting, and evaluating services. To ensure that program resources devoted to specialty areas are adding value comparable to the level of service needed, we also recommended that the bureau assess the scope of its services, identify priority specialty areas, and direct resources to developing expertise in areas identified as having the highest priority or need.

Library and network services

During the past few years, the Bureau of Library and Network Services shifted its focus from priority service to local public libraries to meeting the information needs of state agencies. This shift had a positive impact on meeting the information needs of state agencies. However, the bureau was not obtaining direct input from state agencies as to their information needs, which may have impaired the collection development process and led to unnecessary duplication between the state library collection and state agency collections.

To improve its collection development process, we recommended that the bureau solicit direct input from state agency resource providers as to agency information needs and request their active participation on the bureau's collection development teams.³ We also recommended that the bureau request and review catalogs of agency library collections to avoid unnecessary duplication with state agency collections.

Archives and records management

The Bureau of Archives and Records Management has had a positive impact on records management in the state. However, due to several factors, the records disposition process was not as efficient or effective as it could be. These factors included the following:

- some state agencies had not developed or implemented good records management practices;
- no controls existed to ensure agency compliance with state records management laws; and
- the records disposition process established by the bureau was time-consuming and ineffective.⁴

In addition, many references in Florida statute relating to agency records management functions were in direct conflict with records management statutes. These conflicting references caused confusion when agencies were identifying schedules and making decisions about their records.

³ State agency resource providers are agency staff that are responsible for agency resource needs.

⁴ Records management responsibilities are statutorily placed upon state agencies in Ch. 119 and s. 257.36, *F.S.* Agencies are required to 1) submit to the Library, Archives, and Information Program a list or schedule of records in its custody that are not needed; 2) establish a program of records disposal in accordance with retention schedules established by the program; and 3) obtain approval from the program to destroy or dispose of any record.

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Although the bureau has increased the acquisition and accessibility of historical records in the State Archives, valuable historical documents were being retained by agencies instead of being sent to the State Archives as required by s. 257.35(2), *Florida Statutes*. This practice may put valuable historical documents at risk for destruction. However, the program believed that it lacked the statutory authority to require agencies to turn over such records.

The State Archives has supported the preservation and maintenance of records that have historical value at the local level through its work with the Florida State Historical Records Advisory Board. In the past, the board has applied for and received federal grants using state matching funds. However, a Fiscal Year 1999-2000 request for state matching funds was not granted, which jeopardized the continued receipt of federal grants.⁵

To ensure that the Legislature's intent for an efficient and economical records management program is carried out, we recommended that the bureau eliminate the review and approval of final records destruction requests and delegate this administrative function to agencies. We further recommended that the bureau initiate reviews of the condition of public records in agencies, notify agencies of instances of non-compliance, and include in its annual report to the Legislature a record of those state agencies that continue to remain out of compliance with state laws.

To eliminate confusion regarding records scheduling, we recommended that the Legislature amend statutory language related to retention of government documents.

To ensure that records of historical value are properly preserved and protected, we recommended that bureau staff work with agencies to actively search for such records and test the program's statutory authority by requesting the transfer of non-current, historical records to the State Archives. If the program determined that its statutory authority was insufficient and that a significant number of historical documents were at risk, we further recommended that the bureau request clarification of legislative intent and any necessary statutory amendments.

To ensure the preservation and maintenance of historical records at the local level, we also recommended that the Legislature consider providing state matching funds for federal education and training grants to ensure that the state continues to receive federal funding to support the preservation and maintenance of local historical records.

Current Status ---

The program has taken steps to address the concerns identified by OPPAGA.

Library development

The Bureau of Library Development has strengthened its review process for state grants and has reinforced grantee-reporting requirements to improve local library's accountability for state grant funds. For example, the bureau carefully scrutinizes grant summary financial reports submitted by local libraries to ensure that the reports contain all required information, especially data that show specific service improvements and benefits received as a result of grant funds. When information is missing or insufficient, the bureau sends follow-up letters to grantees. Bureau staff do not approve the summary financial reports until follow-up data is reviewed and deemed acceptable.

⁵ The National Historic Publications and Records Commission will no longer fund local records and archives programs unless matching funds are provided by the state.

In Fiscal Year 2000-01, bureau staff sent 58 follow-up letters requesting additional information from grantees, a 70.6% increase over the number of follow-up letters sent in Fiscal Year 1999-2000. Nearly 50% of the letters were related to the summary financial reports that are intended to demonstrate the benefits derived from the use of state grant funds.

In an effort to assist local libraries in developing outcome measures that demonstrate what is being accomplished with state grant funds, the bureau has provided publications and numerous training opportunities to library staff. For example, the bureau contracted with a private consultant to develop an outcome measurement manual and training program.⁶ The training was presented during the 2000 Florida Library Director's Conference and during workshops in January, November, and December 2000. In addition, the bureau posted the outcome measurement manual on its website to make it accessible to local public libraries. Despite these efforts to encourage local libraries to develop outcome measures, most libraries still have not developed measures to evaluate their comprehensive library services. The program does not require state grant-receiving libraries to develop such measures. However, as of Fiscal Year 2000-01, the program required recipients of federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants to develop outcome measures related to the specific program or initiative being supported by grant funds. In Fiscal Year 2000-01, the program awarded LSTA grants to 40 public libraries and library cooperatives; all 40 grantees developed outcome measurement plans as part of their grant applications. The program will

evaluate the grant-supported projects using the measures established in the plans.

The bureau also has taken steps to develop standard methods of tracking, documenting, and evaluating its consultation services. These steps include

- utilizing a semi-annual contact log to determine the number of consultation requests and consultant response times;
- developing a *Workshop Reporting Form* to collect uniform data about all workshops presented by the bureau;
- developing a *Library Contact Report Form* to document consultation activities, including site visits and telephone contacts; and
- improving the bureau's customer satisfaction survey.

Finally, in an effort to more effectively utilize staff resources, the bureau has assessed the scope of its services and identified priority specialty areas. Specifically, the bureau has used feedback from the customer satisfaction survey, bureau planning meetings, the division director, and the Secretary of State to narrow its specialty areas from 33 to 7 areas. The current specialty areas are 1) library policies and legislation; 2) library planning and evaluation; 3) adult services 4) youth services; 5) state and federal grants; 6) technology; and 7) library friends and trustees. The bureau intends to reassess these specialty areas again in 2001, during the bureau's long-range planning process.

Library and network services

The Bureau of Library and Network Services has taken steps to improve its collection development process. For example, the bureau has increased the number of meetings with state agency resource providers. In the past, the bureau held four meetings per year with these staff; the purpose of the meetings was to provide

⁶ *Workbook: Outcome Measurement of Library Programs*, Division of Library and Information Services in association with Elizabeth Sadlon, Eileen Boyle, and Ruth O'Donnell, September 2000.

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information about new services and materials at the State Library and to give the agency staff the opportunity to interact with one another. During 2000, the bureau held two additional meetings with the Departments of Education and Environmental Protection; the goal of the meetings was to help the agencies better plan and coordinate their collection development efforts.

Moreover, in November 1999, bureau staff began electronically tracking purchase requests from state employees. Specifically, bureau staff input agency employees' requests for books and other resources (e.g., CD-ROMs) into a database that includes the title, author, and cost of the resource. Keeping track of information requests helps bureau staff assess the information needs of specific state employees, provides insight into the broader needs of whole agencies, and aids staff in making collection development decisions.

After exploring the feasibility of our suggestion that the bureau request and review catalogues of agency library collections to avoid unnecessary duplication with state agency collections, bureau staff determined that such a practice would not be practical. Bureau staff determined that many state agency collections are not catalogued or are catalogued using card files rather than an automated system. Furthermore, the automated systems used by some agencies are accessible only on stand-alone equipment within the agency. These conditions would make it difficult and time-consuming for agencies to submit catalogues to the bureau and for bureau staff to extract catalogue entries.

Archives and records management

To improve the efficiency and economy of its records management program, the Bureau of Archives and Records Management took steps to eliminate the

review and approval of final records destruction requests from its records management process. The bureau initiated legislation passed during the 2000 session that revised Ch. 257.36, *Florida Statutes*, which eliminated the bureau's review and approval of final records destruction requests and modified several records management processes.⁷ The bureau has also initiated the revision of Ch. 1B-24, *Florida Administrative Code*, to make it consistent with the new legislation.

The bureau has taken other steps to improve the efficiency of the records management process. These steps include

- revising the General Records Schedule, the schedule that is applicable to all state government agencies;
- developing a Revised Retention Schedule Form for use by state agencies;
- revising the *Records Management Handbook* to reflect the changes resulting from the 2000 legislation; and
- creating an additional customer satisfaction survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the bureau's record management services.

In addition, the bureau has made contact with several agencies that OPPAGA identified as being out of compliance with the requirements of the public records law. The bureau sent the agencies letters informing them of their noncompliance and in some cases, provided direct technical assistance to agency records management staff. Starting in February 2001, agencies are required to complete a form notifying the bureau of their compliance with statutory and rule requirements.

⁷ Ch. 2000-258, *Laws of Florida*, eliminates the requirement that state agencies submit to the division a list or schedule of records that are not needed in the transaction of current business; states that public records may be destroyed only in accordance with retention schedules established by the division, and eliminates the review and approval of final records destruction requests.

To eliminate confusing statutory language related to the retention of government documents, the bureau has worked with legislative staff of the House Committee on Tourism. The bureau has provided committee staff with documentation regarding necessary changes, including a list of the various statutes that make reference to the retention of government documents. The department and committee plan to jointly solicit input from other state agencies regarding the proposed changes.

In an effort to ensure that records of historical value are properly preserved, the bureau has adopted a more proactive stance toward obtaining such documents from state agencies. For example, bureau staff made site visits to several state agencies to review, appraise, and begin the process of acquiring valuable agency records; historical records were received from 11 agencies.⁸ In addition, the bureau conducted a pilot project regarding the acquisition of electronic historical records held by state agencies. Bureau staff developed *Guidelines for Managing Archival Electronic Records* to help staff appraise, process, and preserve state agency electronic records.

However, the program did not request clarification or strengthening of its statutory authority with regard to historical documents currently being housed at state agencies. Instead, the program has chosen to operate under its current statutory authority to test its effectiveness. Thus far, the program has used this authority to obtain records from two agencies.⁹ If legislative action is needed in the future, the program will advise the appropriate legislative committees.

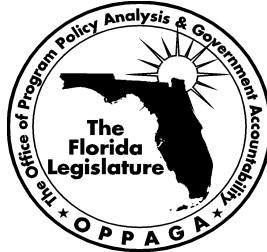
Finally, to ensure that the state continues to receive federal funding to support the preservation and maintenance of local historical records, the program requested \$100,000 from the 2000 Legislature to fund the Florida Local Historical Records Grant Program. The Legislature approved the request, which facilitated the program's receipt of a \$100,000 grant from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

⁸ Departments of Agriculture, Citrus, State, Health, Education, Legal Affairs, Labor, Management Services, and Environmental Protection; the Governor's Office; and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

⁹ Departments of Agriculture and Environmental Protection.

The Florida Legislature

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