

## NATIONAL NETWORK OF THE LIBRARIES OF MEDICINE (NN/LM) SERVICES

### STATEMENT OF WORK

#### Introduction

In 1965, the Medical Library Assistance Act (MLAA) established a program of grants and contracts (P.L. 89-291) designed to assist in the development of medical libraries' services and to facilitate the dissemination and use of information related to health sciences. The original law and all subsequent amendments included a program designed to assist in the development of a national system of Regional Medical Libraries (RMLs); each RML would have resources of sufficient depth and scope to supplement the services of other medical libraries in its region.

Over the past thirty years, with the resources provided by the MLAA, the National Library of Medicine and the nation's medical libraries together have made great strides. Previously inadequate medical libraries have expanded and improved their facilities and collections, new libraries have been built, professional librarians have been trained, resource sharing has been formalized through the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, and new information technologies have been introduced to automate key library services.

The decreasing cost of personal computers, improving public communications networks, and the growing use of the Internet, have enabled the network to reach out to more American health practitioners and to ensure that they have ready access to health information services. As a result of the outreach efforts of network libraries during the past 10 years, there are fewer U.S. health professionals who do not have access to health information. The announcement in June of 1997 that MEDLINE would be available free via the World Wide Web, has also meant that health professionals throughout the U.S. and the world now have easy access to MEDLINE at home, at the office, or through the nearest medical library. Although the number of health professionals without access to information has decreased significantly, there are still health professionals in rural and inner city settings whose access is not satisfactory.

Free MEDLINE on the WWW has resulted in an explosion in the number of searches, from 7 million per year to more than 240 million. Although MEDLINE's primary audience is still the health professional, increasing numbers of individuals are seeking information for themselves or family members. To respond to the public's demand for health information, NLM began a pilot program in 1998 to encourage consumer access to MEDLINE and the NLM web site. MEDLINEplus, a website to provide health information to consumers was developed.

The popularity of MEDLINE on the web was not the only contributing factor to this decision. NLM has considerable experience over the past three decades in applying computers to medical information storage and retrieval. The resulting databases encompass human genome information, data about hazardous substances and chemical spills, and a wide variety of other topics, which can assist citizens in making decisions about their health. The thrust of NLM's developing consumer health information program is to improve the national infrastructure that can make electronic health information more readily available to the public. Thus, the mission statement for the NN/LM has also been changed to include improving access to health information for the public:

"The mission of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) is to advance the progress of medicine and improve the public health by: 1) providing all U.S. health professionals with equal access to biomedical information; and, 2) improving the public's access to information to enable them to make informed decisions about their health. The Program is coordinated by the National Library of Medicine and carried out through a nationwide network of health science libraries and information centers."

An expanded set of goals for the network incorporates the new focus on improving the public's access to health information and developing national programs and collaborations to achieve these goals:

1. To develop collaborations with NN/LM libraries to improve access to and sharing of biomedical information resources throughout the nation;
2. To promote awareness of and access to biomedical information resources for health professionals and the public; and
3. To develop, promote, and improve access to electronic health information resources by network member libraries, health professionals, and organizations providing health information to the public.

The Statement of Work focuses on:

Continuing to work with the libraries in the network in establishing connections with health professionals in rural and inner city locations who still do not have adequate access to information;

Working with the NN/LM and other organizations to increase public awareness of and access to health information via the Internet, with particular focus on senior citizens, minority populations and persons of low socioeconomic status; and

Strengthening network capabilities through collaborations and by implementing national support centers in key areas of need, such as outreach evaluation, training and distance education.

Under the leadership of NLM, the RMLs are expected to assist NLM in developing its products and services and in carrying out strategies for marketing and distributing them. The RMLs are also expected to provide NLM with feedback concerning how information is being used, suggestions for improvements to existing products and services, as well as new ideas for products and services. In all of these areas, the RMLs are expected to involve other libraries in the network to the greatest extent possible. Programs should be designed to facilitate communication between amongst NLM, the RMLs, the network libraries, and the individuals they serve.

Within the Statement of Work, each RML is expected to maintain a level of programs and services to continue supporting the infrastructure of the network. Included are activities related to planning, promoting, and implementing services within the region; coordinating the activities of the region with other regions and within the national program; and serving as a contact point for the region in relation to other library and information networks or health organizations and professional associations. Although programs have historically been implemented on a regional basis, widespread use of computers, high speed connections, and the web are eliminating the need for all programs to be regionally implemented or for regional boundaries to limit collaborative efforts to solve problems. The NN/LM-contracts in 2001 expand the ability to develop and implement a program on a nationwide basis through a qualified institution located anywhere in the network. The NN/LM National Training Center and Clearinghouse and the NN/LM Outreach Evaluation Resource Center are examples of this model that were implemented in the previous NN/LM contracts and that will be continued.

The RML will implement a program designed to provide health professionals in all parts of the region with basic information services, by maintaining or by negotiating arrangements with libraries willing to serve individuals without a library affiliation. Continued development of strong inter-institutional relationships within the region and adherence to consistently high standards of performance is expected. Health professional outreach programs include the continuation of targeted programs to make underserved rural, minority, and inner city health professionals aware of available information resources (including PubMed and other specialized NLM databases). These programs will also promote connection to the Internet by health professionals as a means of accessing the global information community. An important new outreach focus will be the development of programs to promote access to MEDLINEplus as a health information resource for health professional themselves and for their patients.

In the development of programs to improve the public's access to health information, the RMLs will work with network libraries, state library agencies, state, public and school libraries, as well as other regional, state, and local organizations that provide health information to the public. Outreach efforts will focus on MEDLINEplus and PubMed as resources for locating health information.

Program elements included in the Statement of Work, for the most part, do not indicate implementation procedures. In developing a Regional Services Plan, the offeror should assess health information needs and services in the region. The Plan should describe existing services to address these needs, identify service deficiencies, develop programs to address these deficiencies, and specify implementation procedures for all aspects of the program which are designed to meet the three national goals. The proposal should describe the program in detail, listing the implementation procedures as well as specific, measurable objectives; the basis for measuring progress should also be discussed.

The RML for Region 4 must be located in and provide service to the states of Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Utah, and Wyoming.

## I. Goals

As a Regional Medical Library (RML), and as a member of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine, the contractor shall develop and coordinate a program which supports the following national goals:

- To develop collaborations with NN/LM libraries to improve access to and sharing of biomedical information resources throughout the nation;
- To promote awareness of and access to biomedical information resources for health professionals and the public;
- To develop, promote, and improve access to electronic health information resources by network member libraries, health professionals, and organizations providing health information to the public.

## II. Description of Work

Independently, and not as an agent of the Government, the contractor shall provide health science practitioners, investigators, educators, and administrators with timely, convenient access to information through the continued maintenance and enhancement of networks of health science libraries, which form the NLM-managed National Network of Libraries of Medicine. In addition, the contractor shall promote awareness of and access to electronic health information for the public. The contractor shall accomplish this by functioning as the Regional Medical Library for its region, coordinating the operation of a network of libraries including Primary Access Libraries, Resource Libraries, and other libraries to carry out the programs of the region cooperatively. In providing the services described in this Statement of Work, the contractor shall develop and implement a Regional Services Plan which shall be incorporated into the Statement of Work.

### A. NETWORK PROGRAMS

Develop, implement, and maintain a range of programs and services within the region which build upon the expertise of network member libraries and the sharing of network resources to continue the basic infrastructure of the network and which take advantage of evolving forms of publication and access to health information. In addition, the contractor shall serve as a contact point for the region in relation to other library and information networks, health organizations, and organizations providing health information to the public, and coordinate the activities of the region within the NN/LM. In all programs, the contractor shall seek to meet high standards in implementing the Regional Services Plan, and carry out all services in the most cost effective manner consistent with the national goals. Specifically the contractor shall undertake the following:

1. Developing and implementing a program designed to provide health professionals in all parts of the region with a basic level of information services which includes:
  - a. Access to books, journal articles, and audiovisuals;
  - b. Access to online databases in the health sciences; and
  - c. Access to reference services.

The RML shall establish agreements with network member libraries to provide these services to unaffiliated health professionals. For any areas where the RML is unable to establish such agreements, the RML will provide the service on a cost recovery basis;

2. Assessing the needs of health science libraries in order to develop and support programs which improve the transfer of health care and biomedical information within their institutions and throughout in the network;
3. Managing the NN/LM Network membership program for the region. Formal membership in the NN/LM network is an integral part of the NN/LM program, serving to define the NN/LM library constituency (see Appendix 1). The network member libraries are crucial to the operation of the NN/LM network, providing health professionals and consumers with access to needed information resources. Formal network membership is a way of recognizing the contributions of these libraries. The contractor shall:
  - a. Recruit new network members and affiliates from eligible libraries in the region. Network membership certificates for the 2002-2007 time period will be provided by NLM and be personalized and distributed by the RML;
  - b. Ensure that member libraries enter profile information about their library into the DOCUSER database and keep it up-to-date;
  - c. Actively involve network members in the NN/LM network and outreach programs, including obtaining feedback on regional and NLM programs on a periodic basis;
4. Implementing that portion of the Regional Services Plan concerned with document delivery in order to provide health professionals in the region with efficient, rapid access to the health science information resources they need. The plan for the region shall conform to the NN/LM Document Delivery Plan (Appendix 2);
5. Entering into formal agreements with a limited number of institutions in the region to serve as Resource Libraries:
  - a. Criteria for selection of Resource Libraries will be proposed by the offeror and may include, but are not limited to:
    - (1) Quality and size of collection, or uniqueness of materials in the collection which add significantly to the resources of the region;
    - (2) Special expertise which contributes to improving regional or national programs, in areas such as distance learning, advanced applications of technology to solving information delivery problems, digitization of information, library and information research, etc.;

- b. The following responsibilities must be met by all Resource Libraries and the RML:
  - (3) Agreeing to participate fully in the DOCLINE system and to keep detailed library profile information in the DOCUSER database up-to-date;
  - (4) Agreeing to contribute their institution's serial holdings data to the National Biomedical Serials Holdings (SERHOLD) Database and submit annual updates of holdings information to the NLM or keep holdings current by updating them online;
  - (5) Agreeing to provide health professionals and other network libraries with access to journal articles, books and audiovisuals via interlibrary lending mechanisms at a charge per filled request which does not exceed the national maximum;
  - (6) Adhering to network performance standards for fill rate for interlibrary loan service;
  
- c. The following responsibilities of Resource Libraries may be negotiated with the RML:
  - (7) Agreeing to provide unaffiliated health professionals within a designated area, with access to document delivery services via Loansome Doc (all RMLs will provide Loansome Doc services);
  - (8) Agreeing to participate in the implementation of health professional outreach programs;
  - (9) Agreeing to participate in the implementation of outreach programs to improve the public's access to electronic health information;
  - (10) Other Resource Library responsibilities which may be proposed by the RML.
  
- 6. Establishing and maintaining channels for effective communication with current and potential NN/LM participants, other RMLs, NLM, and other state and multi-type library networks within the region. All print and electronic communication should include the NN/LM Logo using the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Graphic Standards dated July, 1992. Communication shall include:
  - a. Publishing and distributing an electronic newsletter to communicate important information about regional and national programs, policies, and procedures to current participants in the region;
  - b. Establishing and maintaining a regional listserv for sharing information with network members, affiliates, other partner organizations, and health professionals;
  - c. Developing and maintaining a regional website as an integral component of the NN/LM website;
  - d. Producing fact sheets, articles, FAQs, etc. to keep librarians, health professionals and consumers up-to-date about services provided by the RML and topics and issues of current interest in the provision of health information. These documents should be published on, or linked to from, a central NN/LM World Wide Web

(WWW) server. Development of these materials should be coordinated with other RMLs and NLM to avoid duplication of effort;

- e. Participating in monthly teleconferences with NLM and the other RMLs to discuss topics of importance in the overall management of the NN/LM program;
  - f. Developing working relationships with other networks and relevant organizations by identifying common program interests and goals, working to develop regular lines of communication and developing appropriate cooperative programs;
  - g. Informing NLM about regional, state and local activities of health professionals and health science libraries, networks, and other organizations as they relate to the programs of the NN/LM, NLM and the national information infrastructure;
  - h. Participating in/testing/using other methods of communication, such as videoconferencing, computer conferencing;
  - i. Attending an RML Directors' meeting once each contract year in conjunction with the meeting of the Medical Library Association;
7. Developing and implementing a mechanism for selecting a Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The RAC must include health professionals and health science librarians from hospital libraries and other large and small medical libraries within the region. The RAC should also include representatives of state library agencies, public and school libraries, health information consumer groups, as well as representatives of other organizations with which the RML has partnerships. The RAC need not be structured as a single body, nor is it necessary for it to meet in a physical location, as long as mechanisms are developed which enable the RAC to function effectively. Responsibilities of the RAC include:
- a. Advising the RML on appropriate mechanisms within the framework of the NN/LM contract for developing and implementing programs to improve health professionals' and consumers' access to biomedical information;
  - b. Advising the RML in establishing regional priorities, policies and procedures;
  - c. Conducting review and evaluation of RML programs in the region at the end of years 2 and 4;
  - d. Developing plans to encourage health professionals and health science librarians to participate actively in regional and national programs affecting the delivery of health information;
  - e. Assisting the RML in identifying health professionals without access to health information and recommending ways to assist them through NN/LM programs;
8. Monitoring and evaluating the region's programs in order to assess their effectiveness in meeting NN/LM goals and to identify and resolve problems, which impede the effective delivery of health information services. This includes:
- a. Developing a formal mechanism for evaluating regional programs in consultation with the NN/LM Outreach Evaluation Resource Center and the Regional Advisory Committee;

- b. Developing a mechanism to provide NLM with regular feedback about NLM and NN/LM products and services from individuals and constituent groups;
  - c. Participating in a site visit and review of the regional program, to be conducted at least once during the contract, by selected representatives from NLM, the RAC, and at least one other RML;
9. Obtaining ongoing feedback from users about their information wants, needs and uses, and recommending ways of improving health professional and consumer access to information;
  10. Providing a training facility equipped with personal computers and other technologies for conducting NLM training classes as outlined in the NN/LM National Training Center and Clearinghouse Statement of Work. There will be one personal computer for every two students. Equipment requirements are in Appendix 3. Priority shall be given for scheduling regional training. When not in use for regional training classes, the facility may be used for other types of training.
  11. Conducting or participating in needs assessments or surveys of users and non-users of NLM and NN/LM products and services and participating in tests of new NLM products and services, when requested by NLM;
  12. Promoting and encouraging the submission of applications for NLM-sponsored grants;
  13. Following up on NLM funded grants in the region to keep abreast of project developments, to share progress, and to integrate results into appropriate regional programs.

## **B. OUTREACH PROGRAMS**

### **1. Outreach to Health Professionals**

The contractor shall continue to develop, implement, and evaluate targeted outreach programs to bring biomedical information resources within easy reach of U.S. health professionals who still do not have access, with special focus on those in rural areas and inner cities. The RML outreach program shall enlist the assistance of network member libraries, through the use of subcontracts, agreements and other mechanisms, to carry out projects with the following foci:

- a. Special populations or subject disciplines that have been identified as priority initiatives (e.g., AIDS, Health Services Research, Public Health) and that target the health professionals serving those populations or working in those disciplines;
- b. Unaffiliated health professionals and health professionals in inner cities and rural areas;
- c. Local/state public health departments with particular emphasis on Internet access and collaborations with other organizations/institutions that work with public health professionals;

- d. One or two inner city institutions per year which shall include identifying what the RML can do to improve or enhance the institution's access to biomedical information and developing and implementing a program that responds to the identified needs;
- e. Institutions whose objective is to train minority health practitioners or those who serve minority populations, to develop specific linkages so that their health professionals and students have full benefit of the resources of the network.

## 2. Consumer Health Information Services

The contractor shall develop, implement, and evaluate outreach programs to reach members of the public who are not aware of how to access electronic health information or who lack direct access to electronic health information. In carrying out these programs, the contractor shall work with a variety of intermediaries, including network libraries, health care providers, public health professionals, librarians, educators, community organizations, health advocacy groups, churches, and self-help groups, through the use of subcontracts, agreements, and other mechanisms. The NN/LM consumer health outreach program shall include:

- a. Developing the region's consumer health information goals and objectives and working with a variety of organizations to accomplish them;
- b. Developing programs that focus on reaching minorities, senior citizens, and low income populations;
- c. Working with NLM, the NN/LM, and other organizations to develop tools and linkages to improve access to electronic consumer health information at the local, state, and regional levels;
- d. Developing programs to promote MEDLINEplus to all health professionals as a resource for them and their patients.

## 3. Training to Support Electronic Access to Health Information

The contractor shall support training in the effective use of electronic health information resources on the Internet. Emphasis should be on reaching health professionals, public, school and other librarians, and other intermediaries who do not have access to such training or who intend to train others, including consumers. Before developing any training materials, the NN/LM National Training Center and Clearinghouse will be checked to identify training products, tools, materials, or classes that can be used or adapted to serve identified needs. Copies of all training materials developed will be made available on the NN/LM web server and will be registered with the NN/LM National Training Center and Clearinghouse. Training should focus on topics not available through other sources and should include, but not be limited to:

- a. PubMed, MEDLINEplus, and other specialized NLM databases;
- b. Finding and evaluating health information resources on the web.

4. Exhibits and Presentations at Meetings

The contractor shall promote NLM and NN/LM programs and services at national, regional and state meetings of health professionals and health organizations with a consumer focus. NLM will provide each RML with an exhibit backdrop to be used at national exhibits. The national exhibit schedule will be set for October-September, ten to twelve months in advance. Responsibilities shall include the following:

- a. In consultation with NLM, providing full support for a minimum of ten meetings (six national and four others) for an exhibit, technology game area presentation, program presentation, or course offering, including making all arrangements (scheduling, fees, shipping, logistics, equipment and publications). Coordination of course offerings, program presentations and other offerings at meetings should be in line with national initiatives and promotion activities identified by NLM;
- b. Enlisting the assistance of Resource Libraries and Primary Access Libraries in exhibiting at national, state and regional meetings;
- c. Assisting NLM's Network Office in identifying health professional and consumer focus meetings;
- d. Seeking opportunities for program presentations at all assigned national meetings;
- e. Attending state library association meetings and exhibiting or making presentations to promote NLM and NN/LM programs and services.

5. Technology Awareness and Integration

The contractor shall develop a technology awareness program which includes the following:

- a. Holding regional showcases or forums focused on the use of information technology to improve access to biomedical information for health professionals and consumers;
- b. Monitoring current technological advances and trends to identify those that may improve access to biomedical information. In cooperation with the National Network Office (NNO), the contractor may propose to design, test or implement projects which use new or evolving technologies in innovative ways in support of network goals.

6. Library Improvement

The contractor shall implement an NN/LM library improvement program, if needed, in the region. If no program is proposed, the contractor shall provide an explanation of why the program is not needed. Site selection criteria are found in Appendix 4.

The following shall be included in this program:

- a. Identifying hospital libraries that do not have onsite access to MEDLARS databases, do not participate in DOCLINE, and meet the minimum criteria outlined in Appendix 4;
- b. Developing a program to improve the level of service the libraries deliver to hospital staff which shall include:
  - (1) Loaning equipment necessary to access PubMed, MEDLINEplus, DOCLINE and web services;
  - (2) Introducing the library manager, key staff, administrators and health professionals to the NLM systems, hardware, software and other resources available in the network to improve their access to information;
  - (3) Conducting frequent follow-up contacts with the librarian to assess progress and offer assistance.

#### 7. Connections

The contractor shall develop, implement and annually update a plan to encourage connectivity for network member libraries and health professionals in the region.

This shall include, but not be limited to:

- a. Reviewing the adequacy of the Internet connections of Primary Access Libraries on an annual basis, reporting the results to the region and to NLM, and assisting the "underconnected" in maintaining and upgrading their connections;
- b. Identifying inner city and rural healthcare organizations that are not connected to the Internet or that are underconnected; consulting with them to determine if they would benefit from assistance with connecting/upgrading their connection, and providing the needed assistance; introducing staff to PubMed, MEDLINEplus and other health information resources on the Web.

#### C. ENHANCEMENTS

Throughout the five-year contract period, the Regional Medical Libraries are encouraged to submit proposals to conduct special projects designed to improve or enhance network programs and services to health professionals, libraries, and the general public. These projects will be within the scope of work of the contract. In addition to regional programs, RMLs may propose joint projects with other regions as well as programs that are national in scope. Enhancements may also be proposed by other network libraries under subcontract to the RML.