

Vermont Department of Libraries
Public Library Report and Standards Applications for FY 2008-2009
INSTRUCTIONS AND SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Complete and submit your online survey by November 23, 2009.

Note: You will NOT be able to submit this year's Public Library Report or Standards Application in paper format. We have elected to use Bibliostat Collect because we believe it will: (1) make it easier for you to submit your data, (2) make it easier for DOL to compile and use collected data, and (3) improve the accuracy of the information that we collect.

For help with any part of this survey, or for other assistance, please contact Rob Geiszler (802-786-3839 / rob.geiszler@mail.dol.state.vt.us), Sheila Kearns, at 802-828-3261 / sheila.kearns@mail.dol.state.vt.us, or your regional library consultant.

I. FY2010 Survey, Part I: The Annual Public Library Report

Bibliostat Collect offers one survey, divided into two parts. The *Annual Public Library Report* is the first part of the survey in Sections A through I. For the first time, you will be able to see your data from the previous year's report. We hope that having that information immediately available will be both a time saver and give you an interesting comparative snapshot of two years' statistics for your library.

Begin the report from the tab labeled "Home." Click "Continue Survey" to see the first page of the *Public Library Report* and the boxes (data elements) in which you will enter your information. Each data element has a line number (e.g. A01 or B01.) Clicking on any of these line numbers will open a small window with additional information about that particular data element, including a definition.

The guidelines (definitions) for reporting statistics meet a national standard and are the same for all U.S. states. Data for each state is collected and compiled by the local state library agency and the results are published annually by the Institute of Museum and Library Services. Our Department uses your data frequently when writing reports and grants and for comparisons with public libraries in other states. This information is vital to our work.

All libraries - whether applying for standards or not – must complete and submit the online Public Library Report in order to remain eligible for Department of Libraries' services and to have an accurate listing in the Vermont Library Directory at <http://libraries.vermont.gov/libraries/dir>

II. FY2010 Survey, Part II: Library Standards

Upon completion of the *Public Library Report*, you will need to choose the appropriate Library Standards Application. Complete only ONE Standards Application. Choose from the following:

- The ***1986 Minimum Standards Application*** (Section J)
- The ***1998 Revised Standards Application*** (Section K)
- The ***Envisioning Excellence Application ("Fast Track")*** (Section L)

All public libraries, even those that do not meet Vermont's minimum public library standards, must complete one of these applications. Libraries that are unsure whether or not they meet standards should complete Section J, the *1986 Minimum Standards Application*. Even if your library does not meet all standards requirements, this process will help you, your Board of Trustees, and the Department of Libraries to measure your library's current level of service and to plan for improvements to your library program.

We invite you to explore the resource materials about standards available at our website: <http://www.libraries.vermont.gov/libraries/standards>

For more information about Public Library Standards, see: **Library Standards** below.
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III. Using *Bibliostat Collect* to Submit Your Data

After you have completed both the *Public Library Report* and your *Application for Standards* – and after you have double-checked your information for accuracy -- save your work and click the tab titled "Status." *Bibliostat Collect* will do an electronic data analysis and may ask you for some clarification of data. These clarifications are called "edit checks" and most often come about because a required question has been left blank or because a value seems excessively out of range. Once you have completed these "edit checks," your information will be automatically submitted.

IV. Online Help is Available

Detailed online instructions are available at the *Bibliostat* site. Log on at <http://collect.btol.com> (using your User Name and Password from page one of this packet) and look for the tan colored menu bar running across the screen. Click on the "Instructions" tab located at the right hand side of the menu bar. These instructions are available at every stage of the survey; just click the "Instructions" tab on the menu bar. In addition, on the same tan menu bar, you will see the tab "Frequent Questions," another good source for help and also available at every step of the survey. Topics in "Frequent Questions" relate primarily to the process of completing the survey, including "edit checks" and final submission. The "Instructions" focus on the substance of the data entries.

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VERMONT PUBLIC LIBRARY STANDARDS

What Are Library Standards?

Vermont public and community (joint school-public) libraries submit Library Standards Application forms each year to measure whether they meet or exceed basic standards of service as defined by the Vermont library community. Last year, 149 public libraries met or exceeded the standards outlined in the *1986 Minimum Standards* Application. The Department of Libraries encourages library directors to review the appropriate standards application with library trustees. Use them as guidelines to improve service or to help set specific targets for the future. If your library does not currently meet the *1986 Minimum Standards*, you may be surprised to find how close you are to meeting them! Department of Libraries staff members are available to assist you in this process.

As you may know, the *1986 Minimum Standards for Public Libraries* were subject to the State Administrative Rulemaking process and, therefore, hold the force of law even though they are purely voluntary. *The 1998 Revised Minimum Standards* have not completed this process. These revised standards are more stringent; therefore, libraries meeting these standards also comply with the officially adopted *1986 Minimum Standards*.

As in previous years, public libraries may elect to meet either the 1986 standards or the "unofficial" 1998 revised version. In the online application process, you will complete the appropriate section, either the 1986 ("official minimum") or the 1998 revised standards. In addition, as in the past, those libraries designated as "Envisioning Excellence" may again use the "fast track" form. ***This "Fast Track" form may only be used by libraries that have completed long range plans of service and successful peer reviews during the last five years.***

Why Should Your Library Meet Standards? What are the Benefits?

The Department of Libraries and the Vermont Board of Libraries feel that the standards program offers a useful tool for self-evaluation in order to provide excellence of service to the public. The number of libraries that meet at least the minimum standards has risen from 42 in 1972 to 149 in 2008 and, as the number has risen, so has the quality of service available statewide. Public libraries that meet standards are eligible to use the Vermont Centralized Card/MARC Service which offers free cataloging for new acquisitions and makes materials readily available for interlibrary loan via the PUBCat database on the Vermont Automated Library System (VALS.) In addition, only libraries that meet at least the minimum (1986) standards are eligible for grant programs of the Department of Libraries.

What if Your Library Does Not Meet Standards?

We hope that you will see the standards process as an opportunity to improve library service. If your library applies for standards but does not meet all requirements, you may request help from a Department of Libraries' *Technical Assistance Team* (TAT). The TAT includes a member of the Vermont Board of Libraries, a DOL library consultant, and a public librarian or trustee from your area. The TAT will help you and your board members develop a written *Standards Action Plan*, with specific steps and a timeline for meeting standards within one year. While you are working with the TAT, your library will be eligible for the services that the Department of Libraries provides to libraries that meet standards. We want you to succeed and hope you will call on us for assistance!

The Department of Libraries is Ready to Help

If you have any questions about completing the standards forms -- or about standards in general -- don't hesitate to contact your DOL regional library consultant or Rob Geiszler, Southwest Regional Consultant (802-786-3839; rob.geiszler@mail.dol.state.vt.us) A DOL staff member will be happy to attend a board meeting at your library to explain the standards process and help you find ways to meet minimum standards.

More information is available at the DOL website:

<http://www.libraries.vermont.gov/libraries/standards>

Please note: In past years DOL has sent an additional letter and set of standards application forms to the Chair of each Library Board of Trustees. **This year we are sending this complete packet *only to public library directors.*** We will send just a letter to your Board Chair. Trustees who have questions or need more information should contact Rob Geiszler.

Timetable

The Vermont Board of Libraries has set the schedule for this year's Standards process, including: compliance, application, approval, and appeals. *This year, unless otherwise noted, standards of service are evaluated, and must be met, as of October 15, 2009.*

- **October 15, 2009**

Date of compliance for standards.

- **November 23, 2009**

Deadline for online submission of *Standards Application* and *Public Library Report*

- **December 31, 2009**

Department of Libraries notifies all applicants of their current status of meeting standards

- **January 31, 2010**

Deadline for receipt of appeals from libraries found not meeting standards

- **February or March 2010** (date to be announced)

Vermont Board of Libraries holds public hearing on appeals and makes recommendations to the State Librarian for action. Notification to libraries takes place within two weeks.



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