

*NATIONAL NETWORK OF LIBRARIES OF
MEDICINE MIDCONTINENTAL REGION
NETWORK MEMBER PROGRAM
EVALUATION*

A James Bothmer

Consultant

National Network of Libraries of Medicine Mid-Continental Region

jbothmer@hotmail.com

402-350-5272

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Executive Summary

The National Network of Libraries of Medicine Mid Continental Region (NNLM MCR) approached Jim Bothmer (the Consultant) with a request to help understand how services and resources can be better utilized by member and non-member libraries in the six state region (CO, KS, MO, NE, UT, and WY).

With the help of the MCR staff and a volunteer advisory group (a public librarian, a hospital librarian, and an academic health sciences librarian) a questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire was distributed to over 2,300 libraries in the Mid Continental region. There were 320 responses to the questionnaire, or over a 13% return rate. The largest respondent group (83%) was public libraries.

Although the majority of respondents did not know about the NNLM or, specifically, the NNLM MCR and did not know who their State Coordinator was, nearly 25% of respondents wanted a visit from their State Coordinator. The State Coordinators and the Consultant contacted by phone as many of these respondents as possible to learn what they knew about the NNLM MCR. A common response was that they knew very little but were interested in learning more. State Coordinators will do a follow-up after this report is submitted.

This report will identify the challenges faced by the MCR staff and suggested strategies to deal with those challenges. The good news is that there is genuine interest from the target audience to learn more and that there is a recognition that the NNLM MCR product is sound and desirable. The challenge is in how to deliver information to the target audience about the program.

Background and Objectives

Evidence shows that access to health information can be used effectively by libraries to address the growing health disparities, declining health literacy, and the need to meet the health concerns of the medically underserved populations in the region. The perception of the NNLM MCR staff is that use of resources and services lags. The NNLM MCR exists to communicate with regional network members the planning, promoting, implementing, and evaluating network programs and services

Two objectives of this project were identified:

- Increase the understanding of how services and resources, especially funding opportunities can be better utilized by member and non-member libraries in the National Network of Libraries of Medicine Mid Continental Region (NNLM MCR).
- Determine ways to increase membership in the NNLM MCR.

This project utilized data driven approaches to identify the “why” as well as to provide suggested strategies for increasing participation by regional libraries in funding opportunities and for determining ways to increase membership in the NNLM MCR.

Methodology

Information was gathered from NNLM MCR staff and select libraries in the region. After meeting with the Associate Director of NNLM MCR to discuss information needs and timelines the following methodologies were proposed:

- Identify the target audience;
- Form a voluntary advisory committee;
- Develop a questionnaire to be distributed online to the target audience;
- Analyze the responses from the questionnaire;
- Conduct follow-up interviews with a select group of the target audience;
- Analyze the effectiveness of the NNLM MCR website as a communication delivery tool.

The questionnaire was developed by the Advisory Committee and The Consultant, Jim Bothmer. Mr. Bothmer has 28 years of experience as a director of an academic health sciences library. He has extensive experience with the NNLM MCR serving as a Partner Library Director as well as host to the Nebraska State Coordinator.

The questionnaire was vetted by the NNLM MCR staff, the Partner Library Directors, and the Advisory Committee. Dana Abbey, Colorado State Coordinator input the final copy of the questionnaire on Qualtrics. Ms. Abbey's input and management of Qualtrics were invaluable. The questionnaire was distributed by the State Librarians to the target audience in the region.

The Consultant was also charged with developing strategies for recruiting new members and retaining existing members. The Consultant contacted the other 7 regions of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine asking how they attracted and retained members. Six of the seven responded. More detail on this appears in the Results section.

Results

Working with a voluntary advisory committee (a Public Librarian, a Hospital Librarian, and an Academic Librarian) and the NNLM State Coordinator from Colorado, a questionnaire using Qualtrics was drafted and distributed to the target audience in the region (e.g. academic, community college, hospital, special, and public libraries). The questionnaire was managed by the Colorado State Coordinator and was tested with Partner Library Directors and with NNLM MCR staff before being sent out. **(See APPENDIX A).**

One of the first actions undertaken by The Consultant was to approach the six State Librarians in the MCR (CO, KS, MO, NE, UT, and WY) and ask that they assist in distributing the questionnaires. Each state has a strong communications network. All of the State Librarians were enthusiastic and eager to help. The final questionnaire was distributed to 2,385 libraries. Two weeks were allowed to complete the questionnaire. There were 320 respondents or about 13.5% of the total sent, which is an acceptable return rate. Of those 320 respondents, 83% were from public libraries. See Q2 in Appendix B.

Of the respondents nearly 39% were from Nebraska. See Q3 in Appendix B. When asked if they were a member of MCR, 45% indicated they did not know. See Q4 in Appendix B. This was born out when interviews were conducted. For those respondents indicating they were members, 38% responded that the availability of resources was the primary reason for joining. See Q5 in Appendix B.

When respondents were asked if they knew who their State Coordinator was, 79% indicated they did not. The interviews seemed to confirm this. See Q6 in Appendix B. This can be partly explained by recent turnover in the State Coordinators. As this is written, there are vacancies in Wyoming and Nebraska. (NOTE: the Nebraska Coordinator has been filled as of April 13, 2020). Kansas has a new Coordinator and Missouri's Coordinator has been in place a little over a year. Having a full staff is very relevant as the MCR begins preparing for the next 5 year contract (2021-2026). As vacancies are filled there will be opportunities for greater exposure of the State Coordinators to their respective constituencies.

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being extremely satisfied and 5 being Extremely Dissatisfied, nearly 15% of the respondents indicated they were either extremely or somewhat satisfied with MCR staff while one percent indicated they were somewhat dissatisfied. However, over 80% of all respondents indicated they had no experience with MCR staff. See Q7 in Appendix B. The good news is that there is strong indication that the MCR staff are effective when they are contacted. When the target audience was asked if they were aware of the resources and services available through NNLM MCR, 71% said they were not. Not surprisingly the hospital/special institutions knew about the resources and services. They are also a small part of the overall target audience. See Figure 1 below and Q8 in Appendix B.

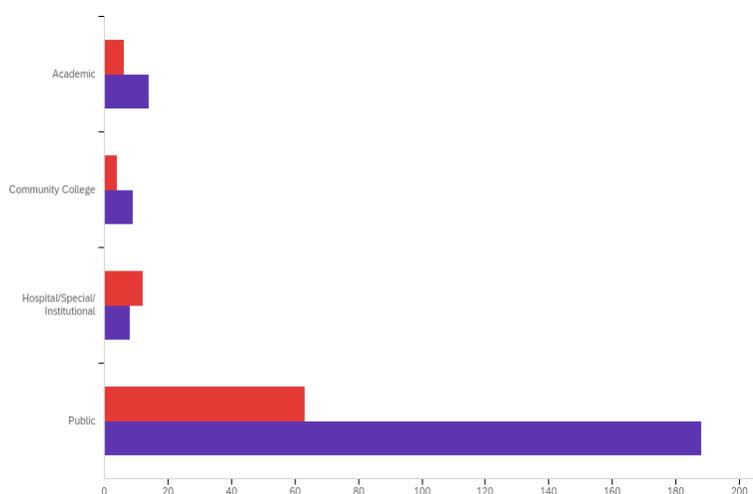


Figure 1 Aware of Resources and Services (red=yes/purple=no)

The target group was asked when they last visited the MCR website. Nearly 70% had never visited it. See Q9 in Appendix B. Of the respondents who had visited the website, 58% indicated navigating the website was extremely easy or somewhat easy. No one thought it was Extremely Difficult and only a small percentage (Public and Hospital libraries) thought it somewhat difficult. See Q10 in Appendix B. That is a positive response, but there is still a need for different and varied approaches to communicating new services and resources. A challenge is to get people to visit the website.

When respondents were asked about funding opportunities, 84% indicated they were not aware of such opportunities. See Q 11 in Appendix B. This was verified during the phone interviews. When asked what a minimum amount of funding would be needed to entice applications, over 50% indicated up to \$1,500 would provide incentives to apply for funding. See Q12 in Appendix B. This seems to reflect the high number of applications for professional development funds over the past several years. When asked if they had applied, over 94% indicated they had not. See Figure 2 below and Q13 in Appendix B.

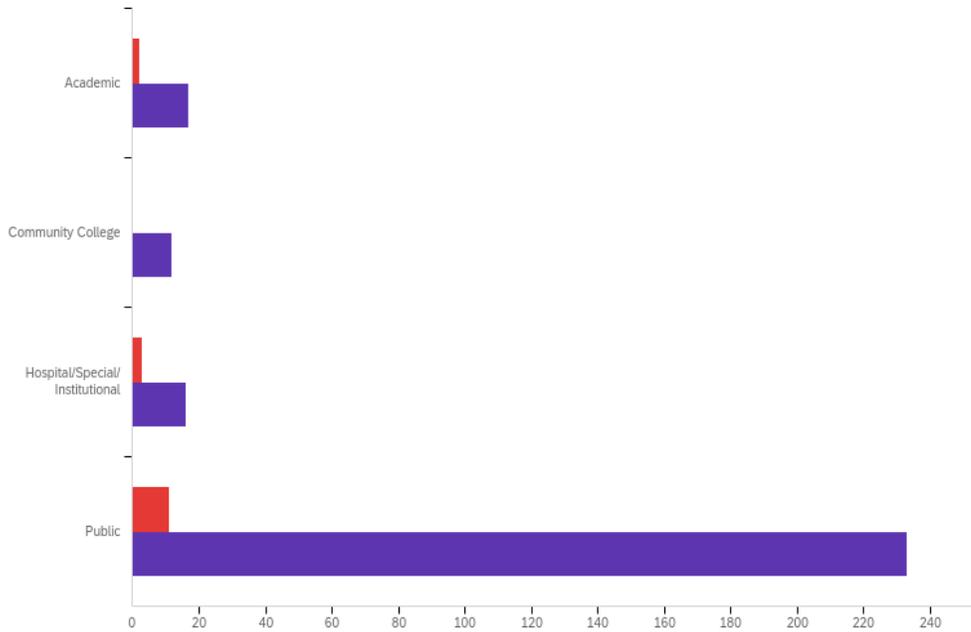


Figure 2: Applied for Funding (red=yes/purple=no)

At the very least the questionnaire made the respondents aware of funding opportunities. Nearly 67% of respondents who had applied for funds found the application process easy or extremely easy. However, perhaps the number of respondents for this question was statistically low to be very meaningful. See Figure 3 below and Q14 in Appendix B.

The overall funding application process was

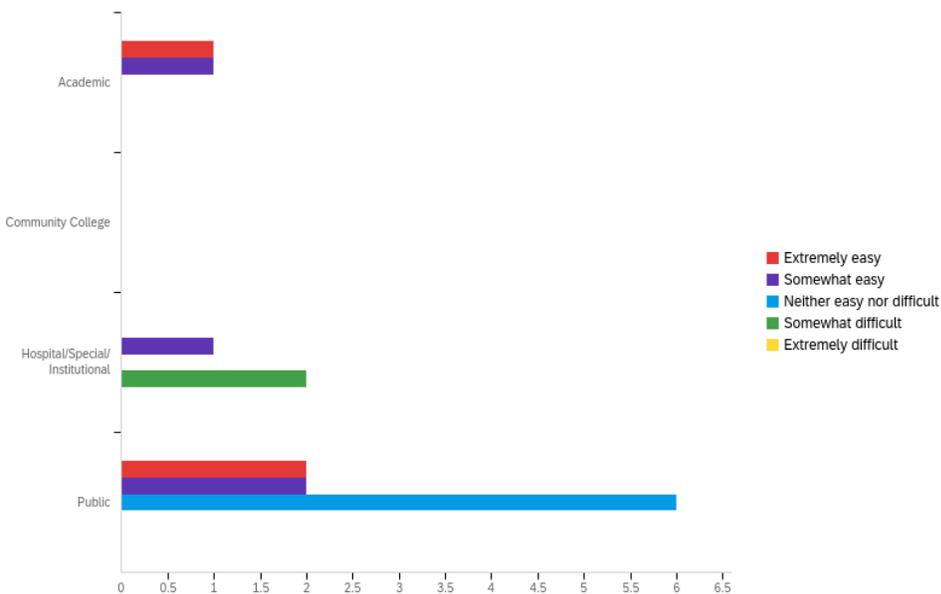


Figure 3: Application Process

When asked what the barriers to applying were, the top two responses were:

1. not enough staff/people (22.5%) and

2. too little time or space (21.5%) to manage grant-funded projects.

See Q15 in Appendix B. Nearly 18% indicated “Other” reasons for not applying. The most common response was that respondents didn't know about the program. Typical comments included:

- *This is the first I've heard of it*
- *Have no idea of what this is*
- *This is the first I've heard of any of this*
- *Wasn't fully aware of this*
- *I don't know of any funding*
- *No knowledge of funds*
- *I was not aware there was funding*
- *Never heard of this before*

This is just a sampling of comments. There were many additional comments along this line. The complete list can be seen after Q 15 in **Appendix B**. The responses indicate an opportunity for the State Coordinators to educate their constituency about the availability of funding.

There may have been some confusion between Question 16 and Question 17. Question 16 asks the respondents to indicate the help they need with health information outreach. Question 17 asked what help the respondents needed with health literacy. There was some overlap and redundancy. In retrospect, health literacy and health information outreach should have been defined more clearly.

The questions were purposely left open ended but that may have caused some confusion as to what information we were trying to obtain. For Question 16, many comments centered on the lack of staff and time to provide health information. Most thought it was a good idea but just didn't have the resources to carry it out.

When the target audience was asked what help they needed with health literacy (Question 17), the comments were much more interesting and useful. Following are specific comments from the respondents. More can be found after Question 17 in Appendix B.

- *Up-to-date books at various reading levels, brochures would be nice too, copies of the news magazine or newsletter for people to take.*
- *Bilingual (especially Spanish/English) materials, good visuals, eye-catching but compact flyers/posters.*
- *Book recommendations, flyers, and posters. Ideally some funding to help buy books- our book budget is very small and doesn't allow for regular enough updates, so we don't have much medical information. What we do have is very general, and it would be nice to cover more in depth.*
- *We have CHIRS information (NE) out by public computers and utilize nih.gov for other information.*
- *Time to offer workshops and time to develop a web site with information for individuals and groups to use.*
- *Current materials that patients can read and understand.*
- *I am not sure yet, I am the only paid employee of our tiny library not sure where to even begin.*
- *Staffing and medical personnel available in our city.*

- *I am not completely sure, that is why I am open to more instruction and information regarding your services.*
- *Webinars addressing questions that patrons, with low reading levels or lack of understanding about consumer health, may have. Free pamphlets and information sent on a monthly basis for display at the library.*
- *Book list of current titles that have reliable information.*
- *Handouts for consumers that are simple and easy to update.*
- *Flyers, posters, hand-outs, speakers, promotional materials, etc.*
- *Would need simple easy to read information for our area.*
- *Students google everything. How do you deal with that?*

Comments under health information and health literacy can be found after Questions 16 and 17 in **Appendix B**. The comments need to be reviewed by MCR staff. There are some excellent ideas presented.

When respondents were asked if they would want to be contacted by the state coordinator nearly 74% of the respondents declined the offer. This was not unexpected but conclusions drawn from the questionnaire and the follow-up phone interviews show there is still a need for that personal touch. See Figure 4 below and Q18 in Appendix B.

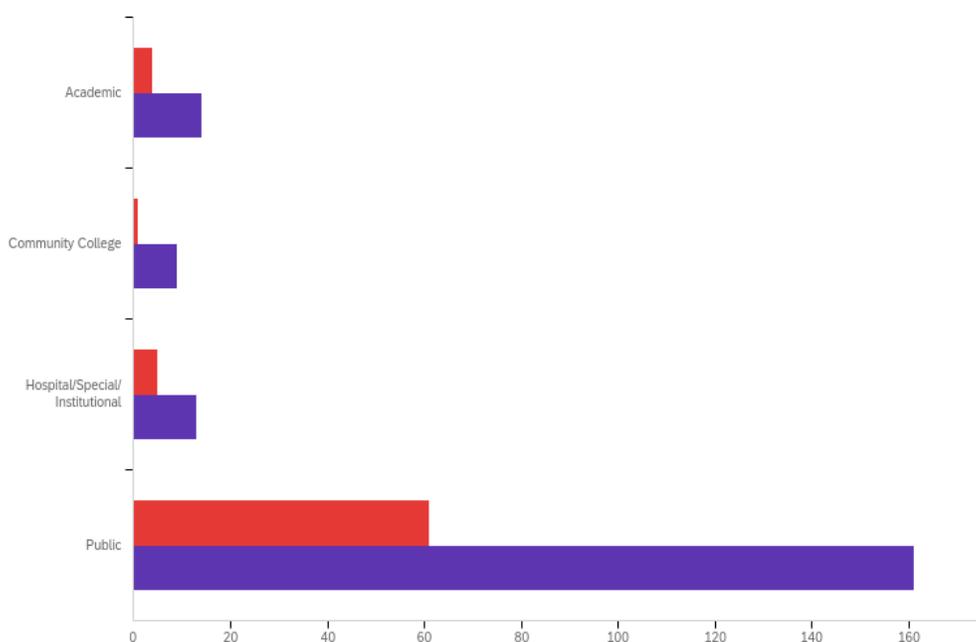


Figure 4: Request for contact by State Coordinators (red=yes/purple=no)

The follow-up phone calls to those individuals requesting a visit from the State Coordinator further reinforced the issue that the NNLM MCR was simply not well known. Most of the respondents from this group did not know about the program or that there were funding and training opportunities. There was significant interest in the program.

New member recruitment and membership retention are also part of this report. The Consultant contacted the other 7 regional medical libraries in the National Network of Libraries of

Medicine to inquire as to how they attracted new libraries to join their region. Some of those ideas from the other regions appear below. They bear investigation. One caveat is that while membership numbers may look good they don't necessarily reflect how engaged the members are with the program. Ideas from some other regions follow. See also Appendix D.

- Having members participate in special projects such as the Wikipedia Edit-a-Thons is one incentive. Another idea is to create member-only benefits such as training certificates or limiting CHIS certificate sponsorship to members only. It is suggested that creating member-only benefits (e.g. training certificates) could add value to the membership.
- One region indicated that a membership campaign tied with another organization, such as the Public Library Association, was successful in attracting new members.
- Another region promotes membership and its benefits during classes and presentations, especially touting the funding opportunities. Promoting network opportunities has also been effective in getting more libraries to join.
- One region indicates that in classes and presentations, membership and its benefits are regularly presented. The benefits listed are
 - Being eligible to apply for grants.
 - Having the opportunity to connect with organizations they can potentially partner with.
 - Being informed about upcoming webinars.
- Social media is used to promote services and information about the regional medical library. As one region contact person said, *"It's by keeping in touch and forming one-on-one relationships with our network members that we're able to help sustain membership. Generally speaking, grant funding may be the primary incentive for new organizations to join. Discipline-specific content, such as disaster grants, seem effective at getting at targeted groups such as emergency management offices. And then our webinars and class offerings that do include CE credit are certainly the bread and butter of what we do, but it's ultimately the relationships we keep with our members that we see as our biggest strength."*
- Another region believes the big incentives for public libraries are the NNLM funding opportunities, CHIS certification from the free classes, the NNLM Reading Club and resume-building from either contributing a blog article or presenting a webinar for the region. Sharing social media posts about those perks or conducting an email campaign to targeted branches or systems highlighting those member benefits gets a positive response. Frequent posts to state library listservs with such information seems to attract public libraries.
- One region indicates they promote membership in all they do. For example, separate membership promotion is done via their communication channels. Sometimes targeted membership drives are conducted for specific groups. Also, membership is promoted at all exhibits and sub-award exhibits and all classes, in person and online, that are taught.

Frequent collaboration and cooperation with other regions should be continued and perhaps enhanced as needed.

Also, see **Appendix D** for an example of a promotional membership drive strategy by the Southeast Atlantic Region (SEA).

Conclusion and Recommendations

As this report is being prepared the world faces many crises brought upon us by the outbreak of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). During this pandemic there has never been a better time for libraries to demonstrate their value as a dependable source of health information, to make a positive impact on this crisis. People are scrambling for accurate and reliable information. Libraries have always been a trustworthy source of knowledge. The NNLM has a golden opportunity to reinforce the value of libraries in keeping people informed.

The good news is respondents that know the program really like it; and the target audience's perception is that State Coordinators are dedicated and capable advocates for the program. Of concern is most respondents did not know who their State Coordinator was. This can be explained in part that there are two vacancies (NE and WY) and two relatively new Coordinators (KS and MO). The timing is right for the State Coordinators to reach out to member and non-member libraries and/or organizations.

Funding opportunities are many and varied but the application process is not transparent and it is too time-consuming for a small library. The process can be a barrier to membership and to application for funding. The key to getting more involvement from public libraries is to recognize that many of them don't have the staff to start up a program or apply for funding. Making the application process more transparent is a desirable outcome, however NLM standards may make that outcome unachievable.

What appears to be the greatest need is to work on exposure and different marketing strategies. Ideally, a visit to each library would be the goal but that is not practical or feasible given the number of libraries and the amount of staff needed to carry this out. Of course, filling the State Coordinator vacancies will allow greater focus on the regional goals. The MCR staff need to know they are doing an excellent job with the resources they have. Nothing is really broken, but some fine-tuning is warranted. Some of what follows can be accomplished without additional cost. The recommendations are based on observations and comments from the questionnaire respondents. Any errors of observation are the Consultant's only.

1. Recommend: Establish and/or strengthen closer ties with State Libraries and special state library organizations to increase collaboration and cooperation.

State Coordinators should work closely with the State Libraries to communicate with targeted audiences (e.g. public libraries, academic libraries, etc.). The State Libraries maintain current and up to date lists of libraries and are willing to distribute information through their communication channels. MCR should continue to maintain their own member lists.

State Coordinators need to be visible with libraries in their respective state. This is not a new strategy and it is not meant to suggest State Coordinators are failing. It is merely a reminder. Face to face interactions are still the best way to meet and greet member and non-member libraries, but technology (e.g. meetings via Zoom or WebX, phone calls, webinars, etc.) allows greater visibility in between visits.

Taking advantage of systems that exist in several of the states is another way to create greater visibility. For example, Nebraska has four systems. (<http://nlc.nebraska.gov/systems/>) Each system has a director. Each system holds regular meetings, including an annual meeting. This presents a golden opportunity for meeting many librarians at one time. Kansas has seven regional library systems.

(<https://kslib.info/573/Regional-Library-Systems>). Each has regional meetings, which offer another venue for the State Coordinator to utilize. Utah has a regional bookmobile program (<https://library.utah.gov/contact/>). This could be a novel way of meeting librarians and citizens by riding along with the bookmobile staff to promote health literacy and show NLM information sources. State Coordinators have taken advantage and need to continue taking advantage of these opportunities.

A presentation at the state library conference is another way of staying visible. It is recognized that State Coordinators already take advantage of state library annual meetings. However, more focus on NLM resources should be part of an outreach effort for librarians. The NLM exhibits are an excellent way to promote health literacy, engage local health care professionals, and get health information distributed. Promoting this as a grant funded idea could increase funding applications.

States have other library organizations that can be targeted. For example, Colorado has a health sciences consortium (Colorado Council of Medical Librarians). Nebraska has ICON, a consortium of health sciences libraries. Other states have similar organizations.

Part of the charge to The Consultant was to identify and create a list of the target librarians and libraries. A list of libraries was compiled by identifying links at each state library website. (**See Appendix C**) The Consultant recommends that the list should be maintained by the respective state libraries. They regularly update the database.

2. **Recommend: The MCR Associate Director should meet regularly (at least annually) via conference call/Zoom/WebX/in-person with State Librarians to share information and develop common goals.**

More formal meetings with the State Librarians should occur. (A directory of the State Librarians in the MCR appears in **Appendix C**). Forging a close working relationship with them and their respective state libraries should be a priority for the Associate Director of the NNLM MCR. An MCR funded meeting of the Partner libraries, the MCR staff, and the State Librarians would elicit ideas for cooperative and collaborative efforts and open dialogue to discuss networking ideas and possible sharing of resources. The State Coordinators should work with state libraries to send information promoting membership or marketing services and resources in the NNLM MCR.

3. **Recommend: Strategies to recruit new members**

Reviewing the other regions' ideas for membership retention and recruitment is highly recommended. Of the 8 regions, MCR has by far the fewest members. Granted, the population of MCR is less than any other region but 337 members out of over 2,300 potential members seems skewed.

Some ideas to recruit and retain members include welcoming new members in the newsletter and promoting the NNLM MCR (RML News). It is a valuable news source. State Coordinators need to regularly check the member list for accuracy.

Highlighting the advantages of membership should be a priority. It appears that the only real advantage to membership right now is the ability to apply for funds. It is time to create member only benefits in addition to funding (e.g. only members can get CHIS certification, etc.). Specific ideas for incentivizing libraries to become members appear in the Results section of this report and in **Appendix D**.

4. **Recommend: Streamline the application process for funding opportunities**

The Funding Page is cluttered. Information is not always clear, and the application process is somewhat cumbersome. Is there a way to streamline the application process? Most of the applications are for professional development. It seems a less structured application process for those types of grants is warranted.

A frequent comment from the target audience was that the application process was too extensive and time consuming for a small library. Investigating ways to make an application easier and yet meeting the National Library of Medicine's guidelines is recommended.

Several respondents requested that a successful grant application be posted for reference. This action is recommended. Personal information could easily be removed.

5. **Recommend: Greater promotion of training opportunities**

Under Training Opportunities, there is a wealth of rich content. MCR headquarters sends out regular communication about training through *News from the NNLM MCR*. That action needs to continue and be expanded. Use communication channels through the state libraries and local health sciences library organizations to promote and advertise the training opportunities. Under the drop down Training menu there are several links (e.g. Professional Development Overview, Our Webinars, Training Opportunities, Class Catalog, and Calendar). It is confusing and not clear which link to use. It is recommended that the categories be tightened up to avoid redundancy and that the language be consistent.

The Class Catalog is a useful tool, especially with the filters that can be used to fine tune a search. It should be the definitive source of training opportunities. On the Class Catalog page it is recommended that the length of the session and the dates of the session be listed with the course description on this page. It is recommended that the method of delivery be indicated with events (e.g. webinar, in person, etc.). It is recognized there is a search option "By Availability" with sub-categories listed below the heading. Still, when browsing the Class Catalog, it would be helpful to have this information on the same page.

Finally, the Web Experience Coordinator at NNLM conducted a survey about training content on the website (survey closed February 29, 2020). Reviewing the findings from that survey is paramount.

6. **Recommend: Evaluate the effectiveness of the NNLM MCR website as a communication tool for the region.**

Who decides which themes to emphasize on the MCR home page? There appears to be some flexibility as to what to include on the scrolling slides on the home page. How often is the scrolling content changed? Highlighting different things on a regular basis is recommended. This is a good opportunity for leveraging the website to promote NNLM MCR priorities and to attract potential members. It is recommended that a 10-15 minute orientation webinar/tutorial on how to navigate the MCR web page be developed.

Following are recommendations for making the MCR web pages more effective. The information in the website is rich and valuable and is a key to attracting more applicants for funding opportunities as well as new members.

- a. The Professional Development page needs to be reviewed and updated. It is not clear how to submit an application. Some of the information is out of date. For example, under the Eligibility section the attendance requirement is listed for 2018/19. For Application Instructions Robyn Woods is listed as contact. She no longer works for the MCR.
- b. More promotion for the Summer Reading program. There was much interest from the Public Library respondents in this program as well as the book club kits idea. Most Public libraries provide summer reading programs. This is an excellent hook to get more libraries to become members. Yet, it is not visible on the MCR landing page nor does it appear on any of the drop down menus. One has to go to the NNLM site to find a link to the Summer Reading program. It is under Initiatives. More visibility of this program on the MCR site is needed. It could be featured on the scrolling slide show or added to Initiatives on the MCR site. Working with the State Libraries to promote this program is also recommended.
- c. Although many of the resources are dated, more promotion of the “Order Free Informational Materials” page is warranted. Comments from respondents indicated they wanted access to handouts, flyers and posters but were unaware of this page. It is recommended that a link be created to NLM information tools such as MEDLINE Plus and other databases that are free. In conversations with respondents The Consultant was surprised how few knew about MEDLINE Plus. Perhaps it could be a link on the scrolling slide show promoting a new resource periodically (e.g. monthly, etc.). Perhaps it could be listed under Initiatives.
- d. It is not at all clear what the “Initiatives” category is. Five of the eight regions have additional Initiatives other than just the NLM Initiatives. Does MCR have any Initiatives? The Consultant recommends populating this category with choices (e.g. Summer reading program, “All of Us”, etc.) other than just “Initiatives”.
- e. The scrolling headlines are an effective way of advertising initiatives and events. However, when navigating the NNLM/MCR website it is easy to migrate off it without realizing the user is off the MCR page. For example, when the visitor clicks on one of the scrolling sites (e.g. CHIS Sponsorship) h/she is immediately off the MCR webpage and on the GMR page. Navigating back is not transparent. It is easy to get lost or side-tracked from the MCR site.
- f. News and News Blog need to be better defined. Clicking on News Blog provides access to an NNLM Blog but there doesn't seem to be a transparent way of signing up. Clicking on Newsletter brings the user to The MidContinental Messenger page. Is the Messenger still the newsletter or has it been replaced by the [RML News](#)? If the Messenger is still a viable publication, the volume number and dates seem to be mixed up. For example, Vol 1 No 1 is dated August 2017. Vol 15 No 3 is dated January 2017. This needs to be cleaned up. And, if the Messenger is no longer an active publication, that needs to be conveyed to the reader and the content archived. Finally, there is a link to MCR News Blog and Bringing Health Information to the Community (BHIC) Blog. While these are two different sources it is confusing as to what the purpose is. Do they complement each other or are the routed to different audiences?

In conclusion, as the Pandemic eventually comes to closure the need for the NNLM MCR has never been more important. Libraries will undoubtedly face hard financial barriers as they open and come back online. Parent institutions (e.g. communities, universities and colleges, hospitals, etc.) will be facing significant decreases in revenue (e.g. tax revenue, tuition dollars, etc.). Libraries are at risk. The need for advocacy from state and national organizations has never been greater. Subsequently, the future of the NNLM MCR is bright. Libraries and librarians have never been more relevant than they are today. NNLM MCR has developed tools for promoting libraries, determining cost impact of librarians on patient care, and calculating the value of libraries. These tools need to be promoted. Too, disseminating health information and teaching health literacy skills keep communities connected. The MCR can reach out to its target audience and provide accurate and current information. These are exciting times to be part of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine. The future is bright indeed.

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Appendix B: Survey Results

Appendix C: State Librarian Directory

Appendix D: Member Recruitment/Retention ideas from Regional Medical Libraries

Appendix E: Phone conversations/interviews with Survey Participants

A. Survey instrument



Qualtrics Survey MCR blank.pdf

B. Survey Results



MCR Survey Results 12 20 19.pdf

C. State librarian directory and list of libraries

The state library directors were enlisted to distribute the survey to the libraries in their respective states. Below is a directory of current state librarians in the NNLM MCR. A link to a listing of libraries in each state is also included.

Colorado

Nicolle Davis

Assistant Commissioner and State Librarian

303-866-6600/6900

Davies.n@cde.state.co.us

List of libraries: www.coloradolibraries.org (list can be filtered for type of lib)

Kansas

Eric Norris

State Librarian

785-296-5466

Eric.norris@ks.gov

List of libraries: <https://kslib.info>

Missouri

Robin Westphal

State Librarian

Robin.westphal@sos.mo.gov

800-325-0131

List of Libraries: <https://www.sos.mo.gov/library> (click on Find a library and select type)

Nebraska

Rod Wagner

State Librarian

Rod.wagner@nebraska.gov

402-471-4001/2045

List of Libraries: <https://nlc.nebraska.gov> (click on Nebraska libraries)

Utah

Colleen Eggett

State Librarian

ceggett@utah.gov

801-715-6777/6770

List of Libraries: <https://library.utah.gov> (list available upon request)

Wyoming

Jamie Markus

State Librarian

Jamie.markus@wyo.gov

307-777-6333

List of Libraries: <http://library.wyo.gov/wyld>

D. Member Recruitment/Retention ideas from the Regional Medical Libraries

Below, provided with permission from Nancy Patterson of the Southeast Atlantic Region *“is a current version of our ‘Join Us’ message, which we customize for certain target groups and for specific times of year - promoting funding, for example, when the new season of grants is opening for application. We also include it along with our ‘Welcome to NNLM SEA’ email for our new members, asking that they share it with other organizations (branches, campuses, just colleagues of any kind) to encourage membership. Many do it and really adds up!”*

Member information from other regions is available at the following addresses. All pages appear to be similar. However, on closer inspection they offer variations on a theme and are worth reviewing for possible ideas to enhance the Mid Continental Region’s Member page.

Southeast Atlantic Region

<https://nnlm.gov/sea/members>

Greater Midwest Region

<https://nnlm.gov/gmr/members>

Mid Atlantic Region

<https://nnlm.gov/mar/members>

Pacific Northwest Region

<https://nnlm.gov/pnr/members>

Pacific Southwest Region

<https://nnlm.gov/psr/members>

South Central Region

<https://nnlm.gov/scr/members>

New England Region

<https://nnlm.gov/ner/members>

Join Us!

Reproduced with permission

We are the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NNLM), a collaborative group of libraries and other organizations dedicated to improving the health literacy of our communities through promotion of reliable health information resources and instruction on how to use them. We serve everyone from all spectrums of the health care transaction – from health professionals to patients. Membership and all services are **FREE!**

Complete our [New Member Application](#) and join us in the fight against health disparities.

NNLM is one of the outreach arms of the National Library of Medicine (NLM) and is divided into 8 regions across the country. We are the **Southeastern/Atlantic** region and we serve these states and territories:

Alabama, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, the US Virgin Islands, Virginia and West Virginia

[If you're from another state, find your regional contacts [here](#).]

Besides that our [free membership](#) connects you with a great network, there are many other benefits:

- Apply for any of our [grant funding awards](#) when they open for application in early 2020. Use one for your own professional development, to host a health fair, to improve your technology, to reach out to your community!
- Attend [free classes](#)* on a variety of health information topics and resources.

*Our free CE classes support the [Medical Library Association's Consumer Health Information Specialization \(CHIS\) program](#).

- Reserve an [NLM Traveling Exhibit](#) to engage your community and/or complement your programming. Themes from The History of Medicine to the Potions of Harry Potter to Medical Careers to Frankenstein and Forensic Medicine are a few possibilities!
- Host a Reading Club – the [NNLM Reading Club](#) is a selection of “ready to use” book titles, provided with free and downloadable materials, designed to help you support the health information needs in your community.
- [Keep up on regional and NLM news and updates](#), including funding announcements from NNLM and NLM and keep informed as a subscriber to [SEA Currents](#), the NNLM SEA blog. You can even contribute to the blog - Just let me know if you're interested!

Network with other members to [form partnerships, share expertise or just enjoy connecting](#) with colleagues!

We'd love to welcome you to the network – Please reach out and let me know how we can be of assistance to you and your community.

Join us! [New Member Application](#)

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Nancy Patterson, MLS
 Network Engagement Coordinator
 National Network of Libraries of Medicine
 Southeastern/Atlantic Region
 University of Maryland, Baltimore
 Health Sciences & Human Services Library
 601 West Lombard Street
 Baltimore MD 21201
 Direct line: (410) 706-2858

E. Phone conversations/interviews with Survey Participants

Colorado

13 librarians on the list. Six responses.

Nederland Community Library, Nederland, CO (contacted by the State Coordinator)

Librarian was not aware of the NNLM program, nor the funding opportunities the MCR offers. The library has a service area of around 5,000, but has over 50,000 visits a year. The library serves as a hub for the community and partners with mental health professionals and senior service organizations. Some partnership examples include providing Census volunteers with internet hotspots to load count data, senior and homebound meal deliveries include library material delivery, navigators to help seniors with technology, and kiosks with community mental health services information. The library has not applied for any kind of program funding, but the librarian was excited to hear about some of our current and past funded projects to give her ideas of the kinds of fundable programs. The library doesn't do health programming per se, but they are integral to programs conducted within the community. The librarian thought the health information resources were of value, in addition to the funding, but didn't have any other ideas of meaningful member benefits. Follow-up recommended.

Pine River Library, Bayfield, Colorado (contacted by the State Coordinator)

Librarian was not aware of the NNLM program, nor the funding opportunities the MCR offers. As far as she was aware, the library has not pursued funding for outreach or programs from any source. She said the library's Programming Librarian does an amazing job of conducting robust programs with little money. When asked about the frequency of health related questions the library fields – the response was 2-3 questions a month. The library serves a population of around 9,000. The library has MedlinePlus, PubMed, Drug Information Portal, and NCCIH as resources on their health resources page. The library does programming on the perimeter of health – like growing herbs, how to make tonics, and how to make and use healthy cleaning products. The State Coordinator walked her through a few scenarios where they could do the same types of programs with a health information component – making them more fundable as an MRC project. The library also has longstanding partnerships with Cooking Matters and the CSU Extension Office. We also walked through a couple of scenarios with these partners for potential outreach programming. She didn't have any ideas for more meaningful benefits. Follow-up recommended.

Chris McGrath - Pueblo Community College, Pueblo, Colorado (Contacted by the Consultant)

Librarian has not taken advantage of funding or training opportunities. She felt updates could be relayed via e-mail messages, but at the same time she is inundated with messages. She liked the RML News update but felt there could be a better design of e-mail message. She suggested putting a linked Table of Contents at the front of the message for easier access and to cut down on scrolling. She requested more information on funding opportunities. The Consultant walked her through the process and followed up with a message containing links to the funding pages on the NNLM MCR website.

Maggie Shawcross – University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO (Contacted by the Consultant)

The librarian was very interested in professional development funding and in funding for projects. The Consultant indicated more funds would be available in the new fiscal year, which begins May 1, 2020. Familiar refrains of not enough time to apply. She is relatively new to the position and feels that membership is very important. Medline Plus is her go to “Lay person” database. She has worked with Dana when in previous positions. She had high praise for Dana. She feels believes Professional development is important and is grateful to NNLM for the excellent webinars. She said she likes the funding page on website. The perception is that she’s ready to take advantage of being a member of MCR. A follow-up visit/contact is recommended.

Jon Walker Pueblo Public Library, Pueblo, CO (Contacted by the Consultant)

The librarian was not aware of the NNLM MCR purpose. The idea of a focus on health literacy and professional development appealed to him. He believes the efforts by MCR will help librarians fulfill health information and literacy goals and he “lauds” the effort. Better promotion of the program is needed to get the word out. He stated he’s been director on the Pueblo Public Library for 15 years and is definitely not aware of the network and has never been approached. A definite follow-up is recommended.

Brenda Marshall, Pine River Public Library (Bayfield, CO) Contacted by the Consultant

It is interesting that there were two respondents from the same library. The librarian knows and has worked with the Colorado State Coordinator. She has had excellent experiences with the State Coordinator and will contact her. The librarian talked about an idea to do community wide step challenge. Funding would be requested to purchase 100 step counters to be distributed to participants in the challenge. The Consultant indicated the librarian should follow-up with the State Coordinator. The Librarian also was interested in learning about the book kids. The Consultant sent links to the book kits and to the funding opportunities. A follow-up is recommended.

Kansas

14 librarians on the list. 6 responded

The State Coordinator contacted all fourteen Kansas libraries by email asking for time to talk about the questionnaire. Six libraries responded. Contact information is available from the Kansas State Coordinator. Three of the libraries are members. Of those three one has taken advantage of funding opportunities. One learned about the NNLM at a library meeting and didn't realize the library was a member. The last member felt the funding opportunities did not fit the need of the community college library she is director of. Here is a summary of the responses:

1. Are you aware of the funding opportunities the NNLM MCR offers? One public library was aware of the funding. One was aware but had not applied as they did not fit her needs. The other four were not aware of the opportunities.
2. If so, do you use them? One library has taken advantage of the funding opportunities.

3. Why or why not? The library that did apply thought the process to receive funding was extensive for a small award <\$2000 and would be a barrier to most small libraries with limited experience applying for grants. Many rural libraries may be opened only a few hours a week and have little experience filling out grant applications. "Grant applications can be time consuming. When a library is open 15 hours a week there is little time to fill out an extensive application".
4. What incentives would motivate you and your library to apply for NNLM MCR sub-awards? Provide a list of previously funded opportunities. Provided an example of an application that was accepted. Help from the state coordinator or Utah in completing the application.
5. Do you know what it means to be a member of the region? All seemed to know what this meant but didn't know why it was important.
6. Are the member benefits meaningful to your library? Other than funding, the publics thought the book club kits were a great benefit but would like to have more than one in a calendar year. Individual courses and webinars are valuable. Kansas libraries have applied for 6 kits.
7. What other benefits would make membership meaningful? Having a ListServ may be helpful to know about funding and other opportunities.

One library did join and requested a book club kit after we talked. One system librarian plans to join so she can share resources and funding opportunities with the libraries in her region.

Missouri

13 librarians on the list. 2 responses

Michael Davis, Camden County Library District (Camdenton, MO) Contacted by the Consultant

Camden County Library District has not applied for funding primarily because it is small rural library. Staff is very busy with day to day needs. They had no dedicated grant person. The grants they have pursued have more to do with meeting technology needs. Mr. Davis believes that reference for public libraries is not as important as it used to be. He believes most of his constituency goes to Google before checking with the library. The Internet has displaced the reference librarian. The Missouri state network provides access to free databases. This is funded by the state library. For example, one database, Consumer Health Complete from EBSCO is an excellent source but it does not get much use and in his opinion doesn't warrant cost the state library pays. The library does occasionally offer health programs in the library and branches.

He is aware of the NNLM but didn't know if his library was a member. (They are not). I sent him links to the Member page and the Funding page. I would say he is a candidate for a follow-up visit by the State Coordinator.

Terri Broz, Montgomery City Public Library (Montgomery, MO) Contacted by the Consultant

Terri had participated in a talk given by Chris Pryor to public librarians in Missouri. That was all she knew about the RML. I gave her a brief introduction to the RML and talked about MEDLINEplus, the Summer Reading program, funding opportunities, and the advantages to becoming a member. I indicated I would send her links to specific information. She would still like to have Chris contact her.

Nebraska

29 librarians on the list. 8 responses

Dave Richards, University of Nebraska Omaha (Omaha, NE) Contacted by the Consultant

*What incentives would motivate you and your library to apply for NNLM MCR sub-awards?

University Librarians don't usually seek external funding. It is not encouraged because it hadn't counted toward scholarship. Internal funds were encouraged instead. A change in culture is needed at the institution. The Librarian thought better communication from NNLM and more information on what is available would be appropriate. He was not aware of the resources NNLM MCR offered. He felt he should be more aware and that he should pay more attention as health sciences programs at his institution are proliferating. He was not aware of the benefits of membership. His institution is a member. He questioned if there was a fee. He believes he needs to educate himself more about the network and needs to be more aware. He claims the "Busy(ness)" of an academic library often relegates other things to a less important status. Definite follow-up is recommended.

Gayle Roberts Blair Public Library (Blair, NE) Contacted by the Consultant

The librarian didn't know anything about the resources available nor did she know what it meant to be a member. The Consultant sent her links to funding opportunities as well as the member page. A follow-up visit is recommended.

Eric Jones, Three Rivers Library System (Omaha, NE) Contacted by the Consultant

*Are you aware of the funding opportunities the NNLM MCR offers?

The director was aware there is some funding for projects related to health education.

He is fairly certain none of the libraries in the Three Rivers Library System is or has applied for any funding. He would be very willing to help promote and advertise the availability of funding opportunities via the TRLS Newsletter or other e-communication. It would be highly appropriate to advertise. There are 80 libraries in TRLS, 45 of which are in communities with a population of less than 500. There is an image issue with those communities. The staff has no library background. The Librarian worked with the previous State Coordinator. He thought it would be appropriate to get healthcare professionals to refer patients to RML. Marketing material in Public Libraries is important. There is a fear among public librarians that they don't want to get into personal lives of their patrons. Most staff in little libraries are retired from another job. Small libraries not exposed to the culture. What does the medical professionals want? For larger libraries are staff getting the consumer health certification? More marketing is necessary. He was not sure what it would take for the patrons to see that they need information. He believes that there is an opportunity for the four systems in Nebraska to collaborate with the MCR. He did know that TRLS is a member. Note: the director retired in February and a new director will be named soon. A definite follow-up is needed.

Laurie Yocom, Cozad Public Library (Cozad, NE) Contacted by the Consultant

The librarian refers health related questions to local health professionals. The Consultant sent link to the MCR website. The last communication from MCR was in January, 2018. The Consultant sent links to the Membership page as well as to MEDLINEPlus. She was interested in the funding opportunities and book club/summer reading information. She thought one funded program could focus on a cooking healthy class for children. She felt stronger partnership with the K-12 school district would be appropriate.

Audrey Heil, Loup City Public Library (Loup City, NE) Contacted by the Consultant

She was not familiar with the region or funding. She asked to have more information sent to her. Interestingly, the director is also a practicing nurse. A follow-up is recommended.

Jenny White, Schuyler Public Library (Schuyler, NE) Contacted by the Consultant.

The director asked to have links to the MCR funding page and the Member Overview page sent to her. (Done). The library is relatively new (two years old). Goals are to offer more outreach. Schuyler is heavily Latino. She was very interested in the NLM Spanish language materials MedlinePlus, and PubMed. A follow-up is recommended.

Cicely Douglas South Sioux City Public Library (South Sioux City, NE) Contacted by the Consultant

The director was mostly interested in knowing the benefits of membership. The Consultant indicated membership was free and that members could apply for funding. She was under the impression that the members were medical libraries. The Consultant assured her that was not the case. Links to member benefits as well as the application form were sent. She is relatively new to Nebraska so is just beginning to explore options. Follow-up is recommended.

Melissa Gomis, Doane College Library (Crete, NE) contacted by the Consultant.

The director did not know about the program and wasn't overly interested. She asked that I send her membership information, which was sent. The Consultant gave her an overview of the RML program.

Utah Contacted by the Consultant

No responses from the five librarians on the list.

Wyoming

Five librarians on the list. 1 response

Jason Grubb Sweetwater County Library (Rock Springs, WY) Contacted by the Consultant

The Director had taken classes from George Strawley and highly praised George's efforts. He was well aware of the network. Lack of time was a familiar refrain. He did feel that the All of Us program is very important. Otherwise, do funding opportunities meet library's mission? He suggested having a Website tool that would redirect the user to relevant online resources. He requested information on the summer reading program (Sent).