Tips for Finding a “Buddy”

**Power Grid**
If choosing only one buddy library, you may want to consider finding a library outside your area’s power grid. See “U.S. Power Grid” ([http://www.eere.energy.gov/de/us_power_grids.html](http://www.eere.energy.gov/de/us_power_grids.html)) for a map of the three grids.

**Collection Size**
Does the buddy library have a similar collection? Size matters. Libraries with disproportionate resources might not be able to meet each other’s needs. Since the agreement is meant to be reciprocal, consider a library proportional to your own.

**Core Services**
Determine what core services are most important to you (i.e. interlibrary loan, bibliographic searches, document delivery, reference help). Will the buddy library be able to serve as a back-up in the areas you identify? Look for a comfortable fit. Remember, you can choose more than one back-up library for specific core services.

**Agreements**
It may prove helpful to have an established working relationship with your buddy library. Knowledge of each other’s services and organization could prove useful in emergency situations. Since staff and organizations change over time, having either a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or a Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA) insures documentation is in place to support the relationship. See “NN/LM Emergency Preparedness & Response Toolkit” ([http://www.nnlm.gov/ep](http://www.nnlm.gov/ep)) for sample agreements.

**Multiple**
You might want to consider having more than one buddy library. A library on the same power grid could be your first choice while a second on a different grid serves as a “just in case” back-up should there be a blackout. Depending on your needs, having several partnerships may prove advantageous.

**Communication**
Once you’ve established a “buddy” agreement with another library, document the fact and make it known to staff and others in your organization.

While you might not be able to find a perfect fit, it is better to have a back-up in place rather than having to rely on the kindness of strangers. Remember…”a friend in need is a friend indeed.”