

**Q&A Session from the Invitational Meeting on the Future of LibraryLinkNJ
FY19 & Beyond: The Future of LibraryLinkNJ Services
Monday, October 15, 2018 - Princeton Public Library**

LibraryLinkNJ invited key stakeholders from the New Jersey library community to participate in a discussion of the future of LibraryLinkNJ. We planned this meeting in collaboration with the New Jersey State Library, which funds LibraryLinkNJ Library Network services, and held it at the Princeton Public Library.

Participants had the opportunity to ask their own questions, get up-to-date answers, and contribute to the process concerning the following key questions:

- Where will LibraryLinkNJ secure funds to stay open beyond this fiscal year?
- What is going to happen with library delivery if LibraryLinkNJ dissolves in June 2019?
- Regardless of the future of LibraryLinkNJ, how can I advocate for priority services for my library and the library community?

Participants asked about attendance at LibraryLinkNJ Continuing Education events and about participation in our recent survey about the future of LibraryLinkNJ. We are pleased to share the following:

- 3387 NJ library workers participated in LibraryLinkNJ Continuing Education events during FY17
- The results of our recent survey were resoundingly in favor of supporting full, sustainable funding for LibraryLinkNJ (94% Yes / 6% No). We received 694 total response, broken down by library type as follows:
 - 445 Public (64%)
 - 105 School (15%)
 - 103 Academic (15%)
 - 22 Other (3%)
 - 19 Special (3%)

Keep up with details on the future of LibraryLinkNJ through a variety of tools:

- **[Virtual Town Hall Meetings](#)**: we hold these monthly, as appropriate. Registration is free, open to all, and limited to 100 participants. We make the meeting recordings and related documents available for public review.
- **[Monthly Executive Board Meetings](#)**: held monthly, and all are open public meetings. You can attend them virtually or in person at the LibraryLinkNJ offices. Please contact the LibraryLinkNJ office for information on attending Executive Board meetings.
- **[E-Updates](#)**: published monthly and distributed to over 4200 members of the NJ library community.
- **[FAQ](#)**: Updated regularly.

LibraryLinkNJ Executive Director Kathy Schalk-Greene shared a brief presentation summing up the historical and fiscal context of multitype library cooperatives in New Jersey, and then took questions from attendees, provided below. Where a response was given by Ranjna Das, President of the LibraryLinkNJ Executive Board, we have noted it in the response field.

Name & Library	Question	Response
Joe Toth, Stockton University & VALE	Table-setting: I still consider myself new-ish to NJ. What do people in this room think a cooperative is, in contrast with a consortium. Are the ideas/organizational structures distinct?	The clearest answer we can provide is within the NJ Administrative Code that established the library cooperatives in the 1980s: https://www.njstatelib.org/services_for_libraries/resources/library_law/library_network_services/
Amy Babcock Landry, Livingston Public Library	I've heard that LLNJ recently hired a PR firm. If true, what is their name, what is the cost, where did the funding come from?	Kathy Schalk-Greene, LibraryLinkNJ Executive Director: This year, as the LibraryLinkNJ Executive Board reviewed the budget, they asked me to fold in funding for PR

		<p>consulting. This is on par with the funds we set aside for legal advice, accountants we hire for the annual audit. We hired Kivvit out of contingency funds set aside last year due to the press reports from the delivery situation this past winter. Just as it's useful to have legal & accounting expertise, we find it useful to have PR expertise available as needed. They have assisted us with messaging and will continue to assist with the process of dissolution if necessary. We budgeted \$20,000, in the budget passed by our Executive Board and our membership.</p> <p>Ranjna Das, LibraryLinkNJ Executive Board President & Burlington County Library System Director: The Executive Board identified this as an important priority. We needed an outside firm to advise us on how to best approach the communications challenges we face.</p>
Cindy Czesak, outgoing BCCLS Interim Executive Director	I'd like some clarification about the advocacy. It's not clear to me if this \$370,000 is a one-time ask or if it's a long-term budget increase?	Our ultimate goal is sustainable funding for the Cooperative. We would need increased funding on an ongoing basis to keep the organization going & sustainable.

<p>Kimberly Paone, Matawan-Aberdeen Public Library</p>	<p>Could you speak a bit more to your objectives, if and when you hear back from the Governor's Office?</p>	<p>We were advised by Kivvit to ask for advice, rather than to go in requesting funding. Within our tight time frame, is a funding ask even realistic from us? It would be very unusual for the end-user/recipient of government funding to seek funding directly, but we're in the difficult position whereby the NJ State Library can educate but not lobby for funding. They have submitted requests for increased funding for the NJ Library Network Line annually, but have not been successful following the severe budget cuts in 2010.</p> <p>We have made both NJLA and the State Library aware of our meeting request and have invited them to participate in the meeting should we be able to schedule one.</p> <p>In the totality of our state budget, \$370,000 is a relatively small amount, but it's a significant amount and there are always competing interests when seeking funding. This is an uphill climb, but we are still exploring that avenue.</p>
<p>Susanne Sacchetti, Cumberland County</p>	<p>Is there any potential to seek corporate funding for LLNJ projects?</p>	<p>We've started first with foundations and are looking at the possibility of</p>

<p>Library Member, Library Network Review Board</p>		<p>corporate funding. We have looked at PSE&G's foundation, for example. Our board member Irene Sterling, has been taking the lead on this process, meeting with her contacts at charitable foundations in NJ. It takes time to establish and maintain these relationships and our timeline is short.</p>
<p>Janet Marler, Ocean County College</p>	<p>If funding remains flat and no additional funds, have you attempted to look at a fee structure for member libraries? Or at cutting services? Many libraries & consortia are pursuing alternate options for delivery if LLNJ were to dissolve. Firm numbers for that are helpful.</p>	<p>Over the summer, we developed a delivery cost-share structure with a team of colleagues from the delivery task force. We felt we couldn't ask member libraries to contribute for a full fiscal year due to the lack of time to prepare. The current FY cost-share covers the second half of the fiscal year. In September, we sent out bills to the 406 libraries on the delivery service for the first half of 2019. That's our most significant cost-share approach to date.</p> <p>We have also increased fees for face-to-face training such as SLS, which went from \$199 to \$275.</p> <p>These changes are, in the scheme of things, small. The difficulty with cost-sharing is that we're in the same boat that our members are in, in terms of very curtailed funding. We don't see</p>

		the membership as another bucket that we can draw on for funding as needed.
Eileen Palmer, LMxAC	<p>I understand the Board's thinking in saying that they needed to maintain all core services equally but I do think that there are some questions about whether or not there could be incremental changes to how LLNJ is staffed & how those services are offered so that we could bring down the deficit to the degree that would allow the cooperative to survive to offer more than just delivery.</p> <p>Could the board revisit this issue before voting to dissolve? All organizations have to make hard choices. The all or nothing approach is frustrating for some of us to understand.</p>	<p>Ranjna Das, LibraryLinkNJ Executive Board President & Burlington County Library System Director: That is our goal for today - we want your help in developing solutions and are open to all possibilities on the table.</p>
Brett Bonfield, Princeton Public Library	<p>Appreciated getting a sense of the \$370K necessary for ongoing costs. What is the size of the full LibraryLinkNJ budget? How much has been pulled from reserves over the years? Can you furnish a general breakdown for costs that LLNJ incurs each year? This would give us a better sense of how that \$370K figures into</p>	<p>When LLNJ was formed, the funding we received from the three dissolving cooperatives was about \$800K. Part of that was used in every budget from FY11-FY19. In preparing for FY19, our final carry-forward is \$330,000. We are using all of it in this budget. The difference in the cost of delivery from what went up by \$400,000 from FY18</p>

	the budget as a whole.	to FY19.. As a follow-up to this meeting, I can share the FY19 budget with a pie chart showing expenses visually. The overall budget is about \$2.4M.
Cindy Czesak, Interim Director, BCCLS Question 2	What happens to delivery if LLNJ dissolves?	Assuming dissolution by June 30, 2019: we have a six month transition period. One scenario for the second half of 2019, we have the legal right to transfer the contract to another entity. The question for the State Library, which I know they have been discussing, is can they be the assignee or do they need to rebid the service in order to take on delivery. Unless a third party would accept the contract, that's the most complete answer I can provide.