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Today's webinar is entitled, library support staff certification, an introduction. The presenter is Karen Strege. Karen was the state librarian in Montana from 1996-2004. Before becoming the Montana State librarian, Karen worked as a children's librarian, a public library director, and Library consultant for the Idaho State Library. She currently works as a private consultant and codirector of ALA's library support staff. I am happy to introduced Karen Strege.

Thank you very much. It's a delight to be here this afternoon with you all. This is an introduction to the library support staff certification program. It is sponsored by the American Library Association. And it is run by the American Library Association Allied professionals Association, that is quite a mouthful. And it is funded by the Institute of Museum and Library services.

I am going to show you a slide of the staff members of LSSC. There is [Indiscernible name], who is the director of ALA, APA. That is me, Karen [Indiscernible last name]. I am codirector of the program, along with Nancy Bolt. And Ian [Indiscernible last name] is our research associate and will answer along with any of us, any of the questions that you might have.

I will provide contact information at the end of my presentation. Today, I will talk about just who are library support staff. Why does the certification program manner. I will talk about the nuts and bolts of the program, enrollment in requirements. How you are assessed if you are a candidate, and I will talk to you about new projects that we are undertaking in the next two years. First, library support staff certification.

It is a national voluntary ALA sponsored certification program for library staff. Library support staff, that is. Now, that is very simple. But we need to talk about this in a little more detail. It is national. It is for everyone in the United States. We also have some international candidates, too. It is voluntary. No one, and no employer requires their library support staff to be certified through our program. It is voluntary. It is sponsored and sanctioned by the American Library Association. And, it is for library support staff. Now, what is library support staff? We defined, and there are many definitions, but for purposes of our program, we defined library support staff as any library employee who works in a position in a library, of course, that does not require the master of library science degrees.

Now, that is a very, again, simple explanation of how we defined library support staff. And you might tell me, well, that applies to janitors, too. But, we defined our definition of little more, by saying that they work in a library functional area. Okay?

So, how many library support staff are there in the United States? Well, out of the 163 -- 163,913, and this is from the Department of Labor data, 69% of all of those library employees who work in academic and public libraries or library support staff. So, almost 70% of our employees.

And, what is in a name? How are they library support staff known across the United States? We found at least 40 different types of job titles for library support staff. And you may have one of these titles were self. I shall, pair of Pro, library eight, library media assistant, library technician, media eight. Those media ones are usually used in school libraries. Circular systems. Lots of different names.

But, for simplicity, we sound -- call our program, the library support staff program. Now, a concern for every endeavor is how diverse the workforce is. We see that within the library and to hold on -- an MLS, 13% of the total are held by people of color. On the other side, those library support staff, again, that work in academic and public libraries, 29% of people of color.

We are happy to say that our program, the candidates that are enrolled so far, we are reaching 32% people of color. Library support staff are essential for the critical -- are critical for the well functioning of libraries. We all know that we depend on other people, especially library support staff, to serve all of our users. People ask me a lot about why they should become certified.

Well, we asked library support staff throughout the country in 2008, before the certification program began, we asked them, first of all, would you like a certification program? And the majority, I think 82%, said yes. That is a very high percentage of people who aren't anything.

And these are the reasons that they gave for wanting to become certified. The first one, across all library types, with recognition. I want to be recognized for the work that I do. I want to be recognized by my employer, my peers, and by our national Association. Second, I want to learn new things. I love to learn, I want to learn all about the library. I want to learn all about different functions and Library. That is, if somebody works in circulation, they want to learn about cataloging, classification for use services.

Candidates also -- or, they were not candidates at the time, survey respondents also said they want to provide better service to their users, and that they wanted to contribute to library improvement overall. They wanted to be a part of the team.

What reason is not on here? Well, the reason that I see is missing is either promotion or an increase in pay. Now, I believe that was a fifth reason for being certified. But, it was not one of the top four. Library support staff that responded to our survey are more interested in recognition, learning, providing better service, and then contributing to library improvement overall.

Now, not very much research has been done in the United States about the benefits of certification in libraries. But, we have some preliminary results from the state of Minnesota and Maryland. These states require their library directors and also encourage the library support staff to be certified in those states.

Now, a survey asks library directors, and those people, library support staff, that were certified, a number of questions about the benefits of certification. Both directors and library support staff identified that users are better served, that is they thought the services given by library support staff, who are certified were better. Then before. Library manager said, library support staff that are certified, again, have a better understanding of the whole of library service. However part of the library works together to provide services. Both library support staff and library directors said that they felt that certified library support staff felt more confident about giving service to their users.

And, both groups thought that certified library support staff have improved their contributions to the library operation, and very importantly, to the success of the library. So, this gives us a good preliminary information about the benefit of certification. And I will talk more about our evaluation efforts in a while.

We know that not every library support staff will choose this voluntary certification program. It is really for people who, after first photo shows, that is what you are, don't seem to really care about the job. Maybe

dialing it in. But maybe for people who want to grow. You want to learn new things. Remember that the library support staff as their lifelong career. And they want to provide better services. Let's see. I lost my train, there we go.

What comes out loud and clear, like Aretha Franklin's voice, is that library support staff are hungry for respect. They are hungry for recognition, they want their jobs to be respect to buy there, again, peers, by their employers, by their library goers, by their library teens, and nationally. So, respect is very important.

Now, who is the candidates right now? We have about -- excuse me, 180 candidates. They are from -- this is a mistake. Cross this out. It should be 35 states. Okay? So, all but five of our states are represented. Colorado is the home of most of our candidates, and that is because the Colorado regional Library Consortium gives enrollment financial assistance to library support staff in Colorado. California, the home of info people, and many of you on the webinar, is the state with the second largest contingent of candidates. And I look and I believe that you, California, have 28 candidates. From all over your state.

Louisiana is the state with the third-largest group of candidates, and that is because the state of Louisiana participated long ago -- well, 2009, in the pilot project. But, as I said before, our candidates are diverse. 71% are white, 11% are black Americans, Hispanics are 5%, 1% each American Indian and Asian. 11% declined to answer questions about diversity. Okay. Questions? I am going to look in the questions box now.

And, I don't see anybody. Saying that they have a question. If you have any questions, feel free to write in a question and answer box, or I believe the chat box. Don't worry about spelling, I can decipher most anybody spelling, even the own. So, just go ahead and write in your questions. We will have time at the end of the webinar, also, for an opportunity for me to answer your questions. I will turn out to the nuts and both of the program. That is the details.

Who is eligible to be a candidate? He must have a high school diploma or a GED. As I said, some of our candidates are from countries outside of the United States. And so, we look to make sure that they have whatever secondary degree that country offers, or requires. Also to be a candidate, you need one year of library experience and that could be paid or unpaid. Now, that experience could be in a special library, a school library, a college, academic library or public library. It doesn't matter. You could have a combination of paid and volunteer experience, or all paid or all volunteer experience.

But, then one year of library experience must have -- you must have worked in the last five years. That is, we want your library experience to be current. Okay? To my knowledge, we have not turned down anybody to be a candidate. To enroll, all you have to do is follow that link there, and I'll provide a link at the end of this webinar. The cost is $350, and if you belong to the American Library Association, the cost of $325. As I said before, we have 188 candidates applications. And so far, we have six certification holders.

The program began at the end of January of 2010. We received about 1 to 2 new candidate applications per week. So, what are the requirements? What do you have to actually do to be certified?

Well, you have to demonstrate achievement. Of the six competency sets by either completing approved courses, and or submitting part -- portfolios within four years. So, let's say you register for the program in November 1 of this year. You would have four years or until November 1 -- help me with a map, here, 2015 to complete the program. So, you have for years. Which we think is going enough.

Now, up a what is it -- what is a competency that? Ours has 10. Three are required. Every candidate that enrolls in a program has to demonstrate that they have achieved the foundations of library services set, the technology set, and the communications and teamwork that. Okay? No matter if you work in a special school, a public or academic library support staff that enrolls in the program has to she does.

Now, we have a number of electives. 17 but if that you can choose from. You have to complete -- 70 let it that you can choose from. You have to complete three. These include -- circulation functions in a library, including interlibrary loans. Adult reader services, which is pretty self-explanatory. Classification in cataloging, an important part of most every library. Collection management, how materials are selected for libraries, how they are -- well, vendor relations, and then discarding materials, too, are included in the set.

Reference and information services, supervision and management, we know that many library support staff, manage perhaps branches or divisions or departments in larger libraries. And so, there is a competency set just for them. And then you services. Which is probably just for public and school libraries. How libraries serve children and teens.

So again, you have to take all of those required, achieve all of those required and you get three selections from those seven remaining competencies. What is a competency? Quite simply, a competency is a statement of a skill or ability. That is how we define it. Here is some examples under the collection management sets.

Library support staff will know the functionality of integrated library systems. Library staff -- excuse me, library support staff will know the general purpose of collection management in libraries. And number three, the basic principles of selecting and discarding of all types of library materials. These are three in this set, and I think this set has about 18 competency statements in it. So, again, these are only three of those statements.

Let's see. Now, I've talked about before, approved classes or portfolios. These are two different ways, two different paths, that a candidate can take to demonstrate their achievement of those competency sets. Now, how do you choose whether to submit a port folio or complete an approved course? Well, here are some tips. If you have no background, no experience, no education, and a set, then you should probably look at taking an approved course. To use myself as an example, my education in classification and cataloging is 30 years ago. I would need to take a course to achieve those competencies. If you have no interest in self-directed learning, and again, using myself as an example, I am not a very good self-directed learner. I need deadlines, generally set by others. I would like instructor and a list of assignments and date due, and that kind of structure learning environment.

Now, a downside for many people for taking approved courses is that it costs additional. We do not design the score says, we do not offer these courses. We -- courses, that is, we make agreements with other colleges or programs or other individuals and those providers that the cost. Now, portfolios, do you have a lot of background, say, in cataloging? Have you worked in the cataloging department for a number of years? Or, have you had a lot of education? Do you have a degree from a library technical college? And did that degree provide you with lots of education on cataloging? Or have you taken the workshop? Then you probably know enough to write a portfolio. Do you like independent learning? Do you not need structured environment? Does the feedback of an instructor not mean that much to you? And an upset on the portfolio is there is no additional cost.

You can go ahead and write the portfolios on your own time, submit them, and there is no additional cost. A proof courses must meet our requirements. Providers, you have many in California, which I will go over in a

minute, for example, the Palomar community college is one of our course providers.

Palomar made a course application to us, and we reviewed that course in detail. To make sure it covered all of the competencies in a set. Then, we approve it. As I said before, the provider says, the cost of discourses, not LSSC.

These courses are online, not in person or in combination. When you look at our catalog, you will be able to find out or click a link to find out if they are online, in person, or a hybrid. The course fees average $400 a course. Arranging courses are somewhere between $125 and one of our proof courses cost almost $1000. So, you can see that there is a wide range. Info people is one of our course providers, we are proud to say. And we have a five course providers in California. Fresno college, as I said before, Palomar College, Long Beach city College, Pasadena city College, and Cuesta College is a new course provider. Most of our providers are community colleges. We have some universities who are either continuing education programs, individual consultants offer courses for us. And library services networks, like Amy goes, you might be familiar with them. And the lead program, out of the North Texas University, I believe, of discourses. We have about 77 courses available for our candidates.

Now, what is a portfolio? I like to look at a portfolio as kind of a scrapbook. And if you do scrapping, you know that you put your best photo, her best documents, your best efforts in a scrapbook. And this is what a portfolio is. It is a select if collection of work that shows that you have the knowledge and skills in a competency sets. The work required to develop a portfolio is equivalent to the assignments and readings that you would do in a course.

You document that you have the knowledge and skills, and you could use your own work, your own ideas, or you could answer a PDF. Now, what in heck is a PDF?

A PDF is a portfolio development suggestion. And, we have gone through each of those competencies, and have made to do for suggestions for candidates for each of those competencies. And a portfolio development suggestion is really an activity or an assignment that you could do to show the invite readers that you have achieved, then you understand that particular competency.

Now, do you have to complete all of the PBS under its competency? No way. That would really be on the call of duty for any candidate. You have to complete at least one. So, you could choose amongst the PDSd if you are doing portfolio. Here is a sample portfolio development suggestion. Again, they competency statement is a general purpose of collection management in libraries. And, our suggestions for the candidate who is writing a portfolio is collect sample policies on collection management for at least three different libraries of daring types and sizes. So, you would look possibly at a school library, a public library, and say a college library. And you would compare and contrast those policies. And then you would give a judgment, which ones do you think are best? And you would have to tell us why you think that. To defend your position. Okay?

So, you can see that this really sound like a classroom assignment. Even if you have not been in the classroom for a long time. You collect things, you use your intellect to compare and contrast, and then you make a value judgment. Okay?

So, if you do that, you would be done with one competency. In a set. Now, what happens when you're done with your portfolio? Well, your portfolio is evaluated. And again, we have 25 readers, just for our program,

we were waiting to evaluate the portfolios. To invite readers to be lightweight or refute each portfolio. Now, if they say that you meant 70% of the competencies, and then you -- I don't like to use the word pass, but you have completed that competency sets. You have no more to do. If you partially meet some competencies, then we'll ask you for more information. Now, we just don't say, provide us more information. We will give this thick details and information on what you need to provide us. We won't lead you in the lurch, wondering what we want. Now, if you submit a partially meant information and it doesn't still meets the mark, then we will suggest that you take a course. We don't want to waste anymore time on this -- excuse me, competencies that are -- we will suggest you take a course. This has never happened yet, and we will work with you as much as humanly possible to have your portfolio evaluation turned out the way you want it to.

Now, there may be library managers on the line, and we know that times are very tough, and we know that he may not be able to help your library support staff employee with the registration fee, or with costs. But we have some suggestions for you that may help your library support staff succeed in our certification program. The first one is to offer recognition. We saw that in our survey, this is the main reason I've are support staff want to be certified. Is that they want recognition. Now, recognition could come in many, many ways, and I am sure you do this already in your libraries, to recognize employee achievement. Telling other people that your employee is enrolled in this program. Telling her friends group, telling her library board, if you're a public library. Telling the academic Dean, making sure that other staff members know about that library support staff who is enrolled in the program.

Now, you could also help with registration fees and course fees. As I said, and of the times are very, very tough, and that this may not be an option.

Maybe defensive help, after their annual bookseller auction, or whatever, maybe they could help subsidize, not pay all of these costs, but help in that way.

Again, you could get time off. If an employee of yours is involved with the course, to meet these requirements, maybe you could give an hour off during the week to work on course assignments. Maybe you could give an hour off to an employee to complete their portfolio. There is more support ideas. Maybe you could help with assignments. A lot of the portfolio development suggestions say to the candidate to interview a librarian. To ask him or her a professional opinion about a library issue or a library function area. Volunteer to help with those sentiments. What you could also do is volunteer to read the portfolios, because we all know that reviewing, proofreading, is great when you share it with lots of different people. As I said, you can inform the higher ups, whatever they are, in your particular situation. Maybe in a school, you could talk to the principal. Maybe could go as far as talking to the school board about your employees registration and achievements in this program. When one of your employees complete the competencies that, it would be a great time for celebration. Recognize their step-by-step accomplishment as they go through our program.

And I know my last suggestion may not work if you are in a union shop or if you have other labor agreements, but perhaps you could add responsibilities as skills and knowledge increase. We hear from a lot of our candidates if they are looking for more responsibilities. And that they will take it as a good thing if these are added to their job.

Now, we understand that is certainly within, you know, the contents of a contract, wouldn't have a job description would have. Just a suggestion. We have recognition agreements with elaborate technician programs across the United States. These programs are generally located in community colleges. And these agreements mean that graduates of these programs could enroll or for that up a in the LSSC programs and not

complete other courses because they have graduated. We complete -- we review these colleges curriculum to make sure they cover all of those competency sets in all of the graduates have to take those courses that cover those competency.

And by now, we have three agreements from colleges in Illinois. One agreement in California with the Palomar College, and one agreement in Indiana, the Ivy Tech college. That means, if you are a Palomar College graduate and library technician program within the last two years, you can enrolled in the LSSCP and not have to do those portfolios or take any more courses. You will just receive this certification.

We are looking, and are in process, I'm working with the Pasadena city College, as I said before, the Cuesta College in California, Spokane Falls community college in Washington, Highland community college, again, in Washington state, and the Belmont technical College in Ohio, to forge these agreements. And so, we're looking to create these partnerships with library technical assistance schools.

We are also looking to build candidate support. We are very interested in having library support staff register for our program. We are also equally interested in giving the candidate's support in having their progress to route our program be as positive, creative, and an educational time.

We offer three webinar trainings a month. To specifically for candidates, and one similar to one I am doing now, to inform [Indiscernible name] library workers about the program. We will offer portfolio readers if a candidate is not quite sure if his or her portfolio is ready to be sent to the evaluation. We will read it in a non-evaluative type of framework and author constructive feedback on that for the candidate.

And we would really like to stop coworker, like for folks that are all writing portfolios, say, and technology. He would like to start many groups for them for candidates to support each other. And we are always looking for more ways to ensure that our candidates are getting through the program and getting what they need.

The next step idea valuation part, as I referred to before, too. And I talked about the evaluations done in the states of Minnesota and Maryland. We are going to take this nationally now to see if certification programs really do make a difference in the life are support staff, and in my birth services overall. So, we are very excited about the evaluation steps because we do believe that we will see improvements in library service by certification endeavors.

And finally, this is a quote from Michael [Indiscernible last name]. He is a library support staff work in Louisiana and he is a candidate. I must say that we never use a candidates name or anything that is any written material or quotes from them without their permission. So I do have permission from Michael to use this. But I just love this quote. And I think it answers the question why library support staff certification. Michael said, "library support staff has a great passion for libraries, for what they are and what they stand for. I feel that my participation in LSSC will allow me to learn new methods, procedures, and techniques to share my love for the library with others, and keep the library's current, and a needed part of the community as a whole". So, I think it is a wonderful encapsulation of why most of our candidates have enrolled in our program. And about the desires to improve, I guess.

I will look now if we have any questions. Anne Marie Olson Wright, hello, my name is Anne Marie. We have just logged on. You would be able to catch the beginning of the webinar? I believe that the webinar is archived, and you answered this question already. Yes, it is archived.

For the California colleges, did you mean Fresno city community college or Fresno State University? Thank you for that question, and the opportunity to verify that. Fresno State University. Not Fresno city community college. Okay, are there any other questions?

If you have questions, just write them in the Q&A. And, eye and looking at tabs, too, to up but make sure that there are no chat ones here. And, I can't see one. Oh. Does the certificate program apply for another type of employment? No. I don't think so.

As you might have missed, the statement I said at the beginning, this certification is not required by any state, by any employer that I am aware of, and not nationally. And it would not apply to another type of employment. That is an interesting idea, though, because some of the technology competencies would be good in any field, of course. And of course, those human interpersonal skills that are reflected in the human -- communication and teamwork are good in any field, too.

I have a question. Will my employer recognize and accept the certification? Some employers recognize those certification, but it varies by employer by employer. One of our big tasks is to get employers on board. We would really like to see them require, I guess, or advertise positions that they, LSSC, not maybe required, but preferred. To make it a standard of excellence. Are there any plans to add the city College of San Francisco's library text certification degree holders to the preapproved LSSC list? Yes, there is..

The city College of San Francisco has applied to be one of our partners in the and work with them over the next nine months, and I am not sure when it will take effect, because we just agreed to work with them last week, as a matter of fact. So I am really excited about that. And I'm not sure when we are going to look at their curriculum, but it will be in the next nine months, and then, you know, there is quite a few process hoops to jump through before we forged agreement. But I'm looking forward to that and we'll make it happen as soon as we can.

So, yes, the city College of San Francisco is going to be a partner. I am really happy about that. More information on our website that you will find, just probably more than you want to know about the program, is available at that website. The program e-mail is lssc@ala.org. Very easy to remember. And that goes to all of us at LSSC. My personal e-mail is [Indiscernible email]. And Nany's you can see right in front of you, and Ian's too.

We try to respond to you within 24 hours, and also try to get great service.

How about the Portland community college Oregon library media certificate program? Certification program? Are they a potential partner?

Portland community college did not apply to be a project partner this time. I have spoke to Donna Reid, believe her name is, and they are undergoing some kind of transformation or transition with her curriculum, and they can't -- plan to be involved, but not at this particular time.

I would love to have PCC common, you know, when they are done making their transition, and I can certainly understand why they would not want to do it when you're looking at their curriculum over all. And so, we will continue to remain actively seeking a partnership with Portland community college. But not right now.

Somebody asked, how many approximate hours for competencies? That is really difficult to say. If you are writing a portfolio, and you are having lots of background in the competencies that -- set, it will go much, much faster for you, then someone like me trying to write a portfolio in a classification and cataloging. That would take me a long time. Because I would have to do a lot of independent reading.

The approximate hours for courses, again, they vary. But you can be sure that when you take one of our proof classes, that you will have full coverage of this competency areas. Some of the community college courses are anywhere from 3 to 5 semester hours of work. Okay? And if you are from California, I know that the tuition for you if much lower than out of state. So that is a bonus, having so many community colleges from California and thought -- involved. Any more questions? I don't see any right now.

One of the things I forgot to ask Info People is how to end the webinar. Isn't that interesting? We could just go on and on here forever. But I bet that they can do that. Before we and our webinar, yes, --

We have one more question, Karen, I see.

Any interest from Maine libraries? That is a great question. I don't know if we have any candidates from Maine. Or, know about the LTA programs in Maine. So, I will take a look at that and see if I can encourage some interest in Maine, too. Great.

And we have one question from Amanda and text chat.

Okay, how can he see that? Under chat?

She says, do I understand this correctly, if you enroll in one of the preapproved school's library text programs and graduate from it, all you need to do is pay the $350 for the certification?

Yes. You of course would have to pay the fees of the tuition, to your library text program. But, after you graduate, you would only have to pay the $350 for the certification program. I must tell you, too, something that is very exciting. We are offering subsidies for enrollment in the certification program that we call RAA or registration assistance awards. You can find more information about the registration assistance awards by going to that website, e-mailing us, is also a good way to find out about those.

Those who offer you $175 off or have off the registration fee. Now, those are only made available and there is only a certain amount available, of course, until November 15. But, you have almost 3 or four weeks to look in that program and make applications.

That program is being run by American Library Association's Roundtable for library supports tough, and that is called [Indiscernible name], so you could also go that in find out more information about the registration assistance awards or RAAs, and I encourage you to do that. If you are thinking about enrolling in the program, if you believe that you can do so within the next two months, because one of the stipulations of those awards is that you have to enroll within the next two months. And then start your progress through the program.

So, that is very satisfying, that we are able to offer some assistance to candidates, because we know that most candidates work in jobs that, you know, are not the best paid sometimes. May I say. Okay, I don't see anymore.

It looks like that is about all the questions. You see one, Karen?

No, I don't. But before we end, I would like to thank you for your attention. Please do not hesitate to e-mail us with any questions. We are really here to help you. And, thanks again. I hope you all have a great day.

And I would like to thank Karen for all of the information in today's webinar. This is, as we mentioned earlier, archived and available, so if you know of any staff who may have missed this presentation, they can always listen to the archive. And we'll also provide a transcript of the text chat with the links, and that will be up on the website will you find a link to the archive as well. Thank you all for attending and we hope to see you at our next webinar.

Great, thank you.

[Event Concluded]