

SYNERGY: The Illinois Library Leadership Initiative 2008

April 1-3, 2008, Starved Rock Lodge and Conference Center, Utica
August 5-7, 2008, Pere Marquette Lodge, Grafton
November 18-20, 2008, Hickory Ridge Marriott Conference Hotel, Lisle

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- Q.** How many people can attend *Synergy* each year?
- A.** *Synergy* is planned for a maximum of 30 individuals who will commit to participating in the entire year's events. We encourage individuals to consider their nominations on their own merits, rather than seeing this as a competition. *Synergy* is an annual event.
- Q.** Is *Synergy* targeting all types of libraries?
- A.** Yes! The Illinois State Library is proud of the Illinois multi-type library community, and we have made and are making every effort to reach librarians in all four types of libraries, academic, public, school and special.
- Q.** This year's dates don't work with my schedule.
- A.** We're sorry about that, and we certainly understand. Finding working dates seem to be a challenge for everyone! In our planning, we look at many calendars and try to allow for major events as well as individual schedules as much as possible since attendance at all three sessions is mandatory and without exception.
- Q.** I am contemplating a job change or have some other personal life changes that might play into my attendance at Synergy. Should I go ahead and apply?
- A.** Each year the number of applications to attend Synergy far exceeds the capacity of 30 Synergists who can be selected. Perhaps you should wait until another year when your professional or personal life allows you to fully commit to all three sessions and to not jeopardize another applicant's potential selection.
- Q.** When I send in my application packet, do I include everything (nominating letter, letters of support, etc.), or can individual pieces be sent separately?
- A.** In answer to your question, #1 under "Application Package" states: "Applicant is responsible for compiling and submitting the complete application (items #1-6) and for preparing cover letter, one-page formal resume and one-page statement." In other words, it is the responsibility of the potential leader to gather this material and to submit it all at one time. Application packages that do not arrive as complete packages will not be considered.
- Q.** Is *Synergy* designed only for those who are new to the library profession?
- A.** The working group that proposed the selection criteria did not wish to limit the applicants by the number of years of professional experience. With predictions that 50% of librarians will retire in the next ten years, the profession will need leaders at all levels.

Q. How many total letters are required?

A. A total of four letters are required:

- 1) the cover letter, written by the applicant and indicating the applicant meets all the Selection Criteria and has enclosed all the requested materials;
- 2) one Nomination Letter as indicated in #3 of the Criteria (the writer should indicate this is the Nomination Letter);
- 3) two Letters of Support as indicated in #4 of the Criteria.

Q. Who should I ask to write letters for me?

A. The Nomination Letter and the Letters of Support are important and should provide quality information about your professional career and your leadership in the profession. You may also want to consider this an opportunity to begin developing mentors and your own professional network.

Q. What do you mean by a "one-page resume"?

A. A "one-page resume" is designed so applicants can provide the most pertinent information about themselves and their professional careers while also addressing the challenge of a limited amount of space. Applicants should use as much of that space as possible in order to effectively demonstrate their achievements and expertise, particularly in regard to librarianship and leadership, i.e., one-page resumes should fill the page.

Q. I'm a school librarian, and it's hard for me to get away for nine days in one school year.

A. Actually, the first three meeting days are in one school year; the next three meeting days are over the summer; and the last three meeting days are in the following school year.

Q. Can you explain more about the "School Library Media Specialist" requirement? I'm not sure what certification I have.

A. The criteria specify the applicant must be a School Library Media Specialist. This requires 32 hours of library science, is based on coursework and requires professional testing. A Teaching Certificate Endorsement (18 hours of library science and coursework) is not applicable.

Q. How will I know if I have been, or have not been, selected for the next *Synergy*?

A. Once the selection process is completed, the Synergy Team feels it is important that we notify each and every *Synergy* applicant. Since that process may take a week or two, we hope you will not make any assumptions until you receive written notification.

Q. I was thinking it would be nice to bring my family along to the Synergy locations with me. Should I do this?

A. No, it's not allowed for you to bring any family or friends with you to Synergy. Synergists will be busy for long hours during the scheduled leadership sessions. We expect your full attention to be concentrated on the Synergy experience, not on personal or work responsibilities.

If you still have questions about *Synergy: The Illinois Library Leadership Initiative 2008*, contact Patricia Norris at pnorris@ilsos.net or 217-524-5867; Vandella Brown at vbrown@ilsos.net or 217-785-9075; Cyndy Colletti at ccolletti@ilsos.net or 217-524-3529; or Ellen Popit at epopit@shawls.lib.il.us or 800-455-4374 x-2024.