

## **Additional Information (1) 12/17/09**

**CORRECTION TO AD: Proposal deadline is MONDAY, January 4.**

### **DEFINITION OF PEER LEARNING**

From the perspective of the Washington State Library (WSL), peer learning is providing a forum in which staff in libraries across the state share information among themselves on specific topics of interest in order that they may incorporate and adapt new strategies as well more efficient/ more effective practices, activities and processes into their own library's work. It is the goal of the State Library that libraries will share their best practices and that libraries will adapt some of those practices in their own libraries.

Because the State Library is just beginning this formal process of peer learning, we are still feeling our way. Much of what WSL does on an on-going basis, mostly in-person, could possibly be considered peer sharing and/or learning. For efficiency sake, WSL is most interested in the online use of peer learning to reach libraries across the state.

### **GRANTS TO LIBRARIES**

Seventeen public libraries have received grants from the Washington State Library (WSL) to assist their customers with finding employment. The grants were awarded in October 2009. The libraries must spend the money by August 13, 2010. The project is referred to as the Renew Washington project. These grants were made possible in part by a grant to the State Library from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Additional funds were provided by the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services.

In another part of the grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Washington State Library has been provided \$30,000 to teach its staff how to develop and facilitate peer learning situations among libraries in Washington. The idea is to use the seventeen libraries with Renew Washington grants as the peer group--giving the seventeen libraries an opportunity to share what is working and not working in their grants as well as giving the State Library staff "real life" experience in facilitating peer learning. Once State Library staff become familiar with the process, the staff will use this knowledge in future work with libraries across the state. It is hoped that the libraries themselves will become experienced and comfortable with the process.

### **FUNDS AVAILABLE**

Some additional money from the foundation is available for the State Library to purchase equipment and software that could assist in online peer learning for libraries in the state but NO additional money is available for peer learning consultant's work. The funds must be spent by September 30, 2010 in order to provide time to report back to the foundation. Because the libraries have already begun working on their Renew Washington projects, it is important to incorporate peer learning into their work as soon as is feasible.

### **CURRENT RESOURCES**

**Wimba** is a virtual classroom that WSL has been using for a couple of years. Many libraries in the state have taken advantage of Wimba through WSL partnership with WebJunction. The Wimba subscription expires June 30, 2010 and will be replaced with another product. WSL staff is currently evaluating alternatives.

**WebJunction Washington** is an online library community for Continuing Education and Technology trends. Washington has been a WebJunction partner since the beginning. WebJunction has discussion forums, group pages and frequent webinars.

#### **CURRENT LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE AT STATE LIBRARY**

Most Washington State Library staff members have experience in facilitating in-person meetings with library staff members across the state, especially advisory committee meetings and meetings to share experiences. Some staff work in user groups also.

#### ***Jennifer Fenton, CE/Training Coordinator***

Jennifer is familiar with the ideas behind peer learning from working with WALT (Washington Library Trainers.) WALT is a peer learning group for trainers using both online and in-person venues for learning from each other. She has facilitated both in-person and online training sessions (not just peer learning.) The online facilitation tool most often used is called Wimba and allows interaction between the instructor and participants. She is also the co-host of **First Tuesdays** with Carolyn Petersen. **First Tuesdays** are peer learning opportunities via Wimba for small and rural libraries. Topics vary and archives are available [here](#). As a trainer, Jennifer has experience planning, implementing and presenting trainings that incorporate various learning styles.

#### ***Carolyn Petersen, Assistant Program Manager***

Carolyn co-hosts **First Tuesdays** and is a popular presenter at library conferences. Carolyn has worked with Wimba for a couple of years and is comfortable facilitating in an online environment.

#### ***Jeremy Stroud, Communications Consultant***

Jeremy provides tech support for Wimba and is often called on to “produce” Wimba sessions for Library Development staff. Jeremy knows the technical side of Wimba.

Other WSL staff who use Wimba for meetings and/or trainings are Ahniwa Ferrari (does a Virtual Reference monthly webinar), Evan Robb, Kirsten Furl, Rand Simmons and Diane Hutchins. Many other staff attend online meetings/trainings on a regular basis.

However, WSL staff wish to increase their facilitation skill in peer learning situations. In addition there are library staff who have no experience in this area and need guidance.

#### **EXPERIENCE IN THE LIBRARIES ACROSS THE STATE**

**WALT** is Washington Library Trainers and is an Interest Group of the Washington Library Association (WLA.) WALT members have been practicing peer learning from each other for many years. With the advent of online meeting tools, WALT members have transitioned into using in-person, online and blended learning opportunities to promote a culture of learning. Library staff active in WALT are primarily from the larger library systems including Pierce County, King County, Seattle Public, Sno-Isle and Timberland Regional.

**Public Libraries in Washington** participate in WALT and a few are working on their own learning goals. Pierce County Library System has been implementing a “culture of learning” and encouraging an environment of peer learning. There are other informal learning groups in the state such as PR Forum, a group of communication professionals in libraries that meet to share experiences and to learn from each other.