COLORADO PUBLIC LIBRARY ANNUAL REPORT (PLAR) OVERVIEW

PLAR PURPOSES

The collection of Colorado public library information and statistics serves these purposes:

- The Library Research Service, an office in the Colorado State Library, a unit of the Colorado Department of Education, is instructed by CO statute "to provide for the collection, analysis, publication, and distribution of statistics and information relevant to the state library and to public, school, academic, and institutional libraries."
- The Colorado State Library is a participant in the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Public Library Survey (PLS) that requires the collection of a core set of national public library data. All fifty states and several territories are participants in this data collection, analysis, and comparison program.
- Public libraries are encouraged to utilize the collected data, available at the LRS website and Library Search and Compare both at the state and federal levels, to compare themselves with their peers at the regional, state, and national levels.

PLAR DEADLINE

The PLAR includes data for the calendar year 2022 and it is due **April 12th, 2024**.

AUTOMATION VENDOR

Counting Opinions (SQUIRE) Ltd. is the automation vendor for the PLAR. The online tool designed to collect the PLAR data is LibPAS. Approximately 20 of the 50 states use LibPAS to collect and report the public library annual report data.

LibPAS is:

(1) supported on both Windows and MAC operating systems and
(2) best viewed using the most recent version of Chrome, Firefox, Safari, or Microsoft Edge.

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS

Make sure you are using:

- the correct URL: https://colorado.countingopinions.com;
- the correct User Name and Password; and,
- Adobe Acrobat for PDF printing.

HELP WITH DATA INPUT AND UNDERSTANDING THE QUESTIONS

▪ Online Help: The Help link or Data Input Instructions PDF provides instructions on using LibPAS.

▪ Instructions: Online definitions are available in the survey (web PLAR) by clicking on any question

number. All of the information that is available in online help is also accessible and can be printed by

clicking on the Instructions link (links are at the top of the LibPAS webpage and on the login screen).

Recommendation: Print a copy of both the Survey Instructions and Data Input Instructions using the PDF links.

SURVEY/QUESTION FORMAT

Question Format: The basic format for each question is: Checkbox (flag), Question Number, Question, Notes, and Answer Box for Current Year Data. For some questions, the previous year's answers will display to the right of the current year answer.

Current Year Data Answer Box Options:

- Pre-populated data collected by the Colorado State Library or other data;
- Blank for you to fill out;
- Drop down menus;
- Locked (grayed out) in order to perform mathematical calculations or to answer specific questions (The user can cursor over these fields, but the user will not be able to input data.);

Flag a Question: The user can flag a question as a reminder that the question is incomplete and needs further work or investigation. Check the box next to left of the question number to flag a question.

Notes: You may be prompted to enter a note if the data entered triggers an edit check. Select the grey notepad icon to the left of the answer box to enter a note. When the note has been accepted the icon will turn yellow.

Private notes can be added by selecting the question number link. Local notes are not shared and can be used to store information about the library's process to gather the information. These notes will transfer from year to year, so they are a great place to store notes about process or specific ways that your library answers a question.

EVERY QUESTION MUST BE ANSWERED

Question Not Applicable or Unknown: For all questions that do not apply (branches, referenda, district supplement if the library type is not a public library district, etc.) OR if the answer is not known, the user must select the exception checkbox as appropriate, otherwise the user will not be able to electronically submit the PLAR.

Valid Responses to Questions: Use the guidelines below for supplying appropriate answers to questions:

- Enter "0" if the appropriate answer is "zero." (Use zero not alpha "o.")
- Enter an estimate when an exact figure is not known—if the estimate can be pragmatically determined.
- Select the exception box ("Unknown" or "Not Applicable") when the library does NOT know the answer, collect the data, or is unable to supply the data.

QUESTION TYPES

Locked Questions/Answer Boxes for CSL to Answer: These are the questions that are locked (grayed out) for the Colorado State Library to answer.

Locked Questions/Answer Boxes that Perform Mathematical Computations: These questions are locked (grayed out) because the resulting answers will be automatically calculated.

Narrative Questions: Narrative questions permit question answers to exceed 250 characters. The PLAR narrative questions can be identified as those that ask the user for an explanation of a previous answer or comments on a certain topic.

FORMATTING ANSWERS FOR DATES AND PHONE NUMBERS

Format dates and phone/fax numbers as indicated below:

Dates: Answer "date" questions using the format indicated at the question's end: mm/dd/year or mm/year. In most instances, a date selection tool will also pop up allowing you to select the correct date by clicking on the calendar.

Phone/Fax: Answer phone/fax questions using the format of numbers only. Do not include hyphens. Include the area code. Example: 7206482948

PLAR COMPLETION AND SUBMISSION PROCESSES: BASIC STEPS

1. Access the survey (PLAR) at this URL: https://colorado.countingopinions.com.

2. In LibPAS, read all the information in the Data Input Instructions or help links (LibPAS information) and the Instructions link (Colorado State Library information).

3. Click and explore the main links at the top of the Data Input screen:

▪ Home

▪ Print

▪ Instructions

▪ Help

4. Print a PLAR Working Copy and the Help/Instructions, if needed:

- Print the PLAR worksheet in (if desired) by selecting Print on the Data Input screen or the Instructions link on the homepage.
- Help is available on the homepage and on the help link.

5. Complete a working paper draft, if needed, then enter responses into the survey (PLAR).

6. When you have completed all the data entry into the survey (PLAR), then select the "Verify" button at the top, right corner of the page to view and resolve:

A. EDIT CHECKS:

NOTE: All edit checks must be answered before the PLAR can be submitted.

- WHAT IS AN EDIT CHECK?
  - An edit check is a data comparison of your previous year's answer to the current year's answer. Edit checks result when a current year answer is EITHER exactly the same as the

previous year's answer OR when the answer exceeds or drops below a national ratio (based on data collected from all 50 states). Edit checks are also generated when a question is answered for the current year and the question was not answered in the previous year.

- o An edit check does NOT indicate that you have answered the question with a wrong answer. Instead, the purpose of an edit check is for you to explain why your answer is exactly the same as the previous year's OR why the data significantly increased or decreased from the previous

RESOLVING EDIT CHECKS

- To clear edit checks, you will need to enter an annotation in the notepad or correct the data provided, if needed. If entering a note, provide a brief, pragmatic explanation why the current year answer is correct. Example of an edit check: "LARGE CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR TO CURRENT."
    - o Sample responses to this edit check are: "Less money for materials because the staff received raises." "No e-books because our library discontinued the service."
    - o Most edit checks will be triggered when data is entered into the fields. The question/edit check will trigger a note window to appear on the screen which describes why the edit check failed and will ask for an annotation. If an annotation is not provided, the data will need to be updated.
- Other edit checks may appear when you hit the "Verify" button. Edit checks will be highlighted in red. You can select the edit check and you will be taken to the question where the variance has occurred. Select the notepad icon to the left of the answer box to add an annotation or correct the data, if needed, to clear the edit check.
- Some edit checks may appear when you hit the "Submit/Lock" button. In this case, a single window will open listing the number(s) of the question(s) involved and the reason for the edit check(s). Click on the edit check and you will be taken to the question where a note needs to be added. Select the notepad icon to the left of the question to add an annotation or correct the data, if needed, to clear the edit check(s).

B. UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

All REQUIRED unanswered questions must be resolved before the survey PLAR can be electronically submitted. These may include questions that you accidentally missed, flagged to return to later, or simply are not applicable and need to be answered by checking the exception box (Not Applicable, Unknown) or entering a zero, as appropriate.

C. FLAGGED QUESTIONS

Flagged questions are questions that you have checked to answer/revisit after gathering appropriate information. Before submitting your report, you need to review these questions to make sure they have been answered.

7. Submitting the Survey (PLAR): Preliminary Steps

Step 1: Resolve all edit checks and all required unanswered questions.

Step 2: Click the "Submit/Lock" button in the top right corner of the page. The survey will run its final edit check process. If submission is successful, you should see "Thank you for submitting the survey for your library. The survey is now locked" in red text and the "Submit/Lock" button text will change to "Unlock."

8. Print or save one copy for your files. You can print or save the PLAR as a .pdf by clicking on the "Print" link at the very top of the page.

Please Note:

There is no paper packet submission for the PLAR. All items must be submitted electronically.