



VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF LIBRARIES REORGANIZATION STUDY - 2016



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Background

All 50 states have some entity that serves as a “state library agency.” In some instances, these entities are referred to as “state libraries” and operate large facilities, house large collections of books and other resources, have extensive professional staffing, and offer a wide array of services directly to the public. The Library of Virginia with a budget in excess of 35 million dollars is a good example of this model.



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There are also state library agencies that incorporate state archives and/or state law library functions; however, most do not. In one case (Massachusetts) there is both an entity identified as a state library (The State Library of Massachusetts) and a separate state library development agency (Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners) that provides support and enhancement services to public libraries. Most states have one agency that works to improve library services by assisting and building the capacity of local libraries and a separate state archives department or division.

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In many instances, state library agencies act solely as service organizations supporting public (and sometimes school) libraries, have little or no collections of physical resources (books and other materials), and offer little or no direct service to the public. Most states also offer special services to the Blind and Physically Handicapped through a program that is partially supported by the Library of Congress.

In between the extremes of large “state libraries” and pure library development “service entities” are agencies that have modest collections and primarily serve the professional needs of state departments and state employees. In short, there is no single model of a state library agency that can be cited as being either typical or exemplary. Models of service depend largely on the capacities that exist elsewhere in state governments.

The location of state library agencies within state government also varies widely. Placement in state government appears to be independent of the given library agency’s scope of service. Some state library agencies are independent entities that report directly to policy-making boards. Such is the case in Massachusetts (a library development service entity) and New Hampshire (a state library and a library development service entity). Rhode Island’s Office of Library and Information Services (a library development service entity) and the Connecticut State Library (a state library and a library development service entity) are both agencies within the Administrative/Executive Branch of their respective state governments. Some state library agencies operate as divisions or departments under the Secretary of State’s Office. Delaware (a library development service entity) and Tennessee (a state library and a service entity) are examples of this model. As with scope of service, there is no single model in regard to placement in state government that can be cited as being either typical or exemplary.

Existing Situation in Vermont

The Vermont Department of Libraries (VTLIB) has operated as a hybrid entity (not a true state library nor a service organization) for an extended period of time. A review of Vermont State Statutes authorizing the Department of Libraries (22 V.S.A. §601-635) reveals a very dated set of duties that is largely oriented to physical collections of materials. References to “filmstrips, “book wagons,” and the elevation of “rebinding books” to inclusion in statutory language indicates that significant updating of the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Libraries is long past due. The duties and functions sections of the relevant statutes are provided below for reference.

§ 605. Duties and functions of the Department of Libraries

The duties and functions of the Department of Libraries shall be to provide, administer, and maintain:

(1) A law library to serve the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, other members of the Judiciary, the legal profession, members of the Legislature, officials of State government and the general public.

(2) A collection of State documents and of documents relating to other states, and local and federal governments. It shall arrange for and designate depositories of State documents which designation is to include Bailey Library at the University of Vermont. The Department may acquire reports and documents published by federal agencies and by other states and countries, and may arrange for the exchange of official reports and publications with federal agencies, and with governmental agencies in other states and countries.

(3) An information and reference service to State government, including a comprehensive collection of current information relating to matters of public policy and topics pertinent to State government.

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(4) A general library collection of a sufficient size and scope to reinforce and supplement the resources of local and regional libraries. All materials of the Department of Libraries shall be available for free circulation to all citizens, institutions and organizations under regulations of the State Librarian except that the State Librarian may restrict rare or reference-type materials to one location. The Department shall arrange, classify, and catalog all materials in its custody and provide for their safekeeping, and shall rebind books as needed. The Department shall provide service to other libraries in the State, schools, and individuals, and may provide service by mail or book wagon or otherwise.

(5) A service of advice and consultation to all libraries in the State, in order to assist them in realizing their potential. This service shall be provided at a regional level as well as at the State level. The Department may provide centralized cataloging and other related technical services to libraries in the State to the extent feasible.

(6) All libraries in State correctional institutions and all State institutions for the treatment of persons with a mental condition or psychiatric disability and persons with an intellectual disability.

(7) Reading materials for persons who are blind and persons with a physical disability. (Added 1969, No. 226 (Adj. Sess.), § 4, eff. March 31, 1970; amended 1971, No. 162 (Adj. Sess.), § 1; 2013, No. 96 (Adj. Sess.), § 140.)

§ 606. Other duties and functions

The Department, in addition to the functions specified in section 605 of this title:

(1) Shall administer any grants-in-aid to libraries which may be available from State funds, and may prepare plans and applications to obtain federal aid monies which may be available.

(2) Shall provide consultative services to other libraries in the State, and shall encourage formation of central records of library holdings.

(3) Shall promote improved communications among libraries in the State as well as cooperative use of facilities.

(4) May provide facilities in cooperation with other libraries for storage of little used materials.

(5) May conduct seminars, workshops, and other programs to increase the professional competence of librarians in the State.

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(6) May receive and administer gifts of real and personal property accepted by the Governor on behalf of the State under 29 V.S.A. § 101.

(7) May dispose of by sale or exchange, or may discard, material which is obsolete or has ceased to be useful, because of its physical condition or otherwise. Any proceeds from the sale or disposition of materials shall be credited to a special fund established and managed pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5, and shall be available to the Department for the purchase of library materials.

(8) Shall be the primary access point for State information, and provide advice on State information technology policy. (Added 1969, No. 226 (Adj. Sess.), § 4, eff. March 31, 1970; amended 1995, No. 148 (Adj. Sess.), §§ 4(a), 11, eff. May 6, 1996; 1997, No. 59, § 15, eff. June 30, 1997; 2009, No. 33, § 44; 2009, No. 91 (Adj. Sess.), § 10, eff. May 6, 2010.)

In addition to being badly dated, the ability of the Department of Libraries to carry out its statutory responsibilities has been severely undermined by a longstanding, steady erosion of the funding required to maintain current and relevant collections of physical materials. Each year, the collections of materials maintained by the Department of Libraries become less relevant and less useful to meet the professional needs of state government employees, the general public, and the public and school libraries of Vermont.

While the services described by the Statutes have continued to some extent until the most recent budget cuts when Law Library responsibilities were shifted to the Vermont Law School, the resources available to Department of Libraries staff to answer reference questions, and to provide back-up reference and information resources to the public and to other libraries in the State have been dwindling. Work is underway to cooperate with other collecting institutions, both within and outside of State government (e.g., State Archives, UVM's Bailey/Howe Library) to ensure that the public continues to have the best access possible to historic resources.

The combination of the gradual erosion of funding to maintain and update collections of physical materials and FY 2016 staffing cuts (a reduction of nearly one-third of the workforce from 26 full-time equivalents to 19 full-time equivalents), leave the Department of Libraries without the capacity to fully carry out its mission. This fact is further underscored by the fact that the recent staff cuts are merely the latest round of reductions. As recently as FY 2008, the Department had 36 employees. Since 2008, staff has been reduced 47%. The magnitude of the reductions makes the concept of proportional reductions and/or tinkering at the margins untenable.

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Process Used to Identify Potential Reorganization Models

Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants was retained by the Vermont Department of Libraries to examine the existing situation and to make recommendations for reorganizing the Department to maximize its impact on the people of Vermont. The Himmel & Wilson firm has worked extensively with state library agencies throughout the United States (including previous projects in Vermont) and, Himmel & Wilson partners Dr. Ethel Himmel and Mr. William Wilson, also authored a volume published by the American Library Association entitled the ***Functions and Roles of State Library Agencies***.

In conducting the study, Himmel & Wilson reviewed a significant number of background documents, interviewed all Department of Libraries staff members, met with the Board of Libraries and interviewed each member individually, met with a sample of librarians from throughout the State and with representatives of other state agencies and non-profit organizations that work regularly with the Department of Libraries to discuss a possible reorganization.

Himmel & Wilson also examined the mission and purpose statements from more than a score of other state library agencies and identified staffing patterns that might inform Vermont's reorganization efforts. The consultants also reviewed the roles and responsibilities of three Vermont agencies to determine how emerging, future-oriented duties of a reorganized Department of Libraries might align with the priorities of the agencies. The Vermont agencies examined were:

- The Vermont Agency of Administration
- The Office of the Vermont Secretary of State
- The Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development

The principal consultant, Bill Wilson, met with high level representatives of each of these departments.

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Findings

- 1.) The Vermont Department of Libraries lacks the financial resources to build and maintain the collections and other resources and the staffing necessary to adequately fulfill responsibilities 1 and 3 (Law Library and Library Services to State Government) specified in 22 V.S.A. §605.
- 2.) The transition of public documents from physical print to electronic form that has vastly altered the ways in which documents are accessed calls for a review and reconsideration of how access to public documents (22 V.S.A. §605 Section 2, as well as 22 V.S.A. §601 (c)) should be handled and how duplication of efforts might be minimized or eliminated within State Government.
- 3.) The Vermont Department of Libraries lacks the financial resources to build and maintain the collections and other resources and the staffing necessary to adequately fulfill responsibility 4 (General Library Collection to reinforce and supplement regional and local libraries) specified in 22 V.S.A. §605.
- 4.) The needs of public libraries for assistance and support in areas such as technology, services to children and youth, facilities, administration, as well as communication, staff development, training, and resource sharing have grown significantly. (see sections 1 through 5 in 22 V.S.A. §606)
- 5.) While the needs of individuals with sight and physical impairments for access to resources outlined in section 7 of 22 V.S.A. §605 remain high, the new format of talking books used by the Library of Congress (National Library Service) program and opportunities for contracting content and machine fulfillment calls for a review of existing processes and the potential expansion of outreach to other special needs populations.

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Recommendations

The following principles have been applied in developing recommendations:

- Maximize public access to information and resources
- Enhance the availability of information available to State government departments and State employees
- Eliminate replication/duplication of resources when possible without compromising access
- Enhance digital tools and delivery systems available to libraries in Vermont that enable them to share resources
- Enhance the capacity of local libraries of all types (public, school, academic) to serve residents of the State of Vermont
- Implement efficiency by implementing best practices in regard to service delivery models

Recommendation # 1

Streamline and/or eliminate the majority of “physical (primarily print-on-paper/book)” library collection functions that the Department of Libraries has performed in the past and move toward a model that employs primarily electronic resources and focuses on services to state government.

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Recommendation # 2

“Weed” existing collections of dated materials (with the exception of those of historical value) and relocate the majority of physical collections to State Archives and other Vermont collecting institutions that can provide better public access to these resources. Some of this work has already been accomplished and other investigations regarding relocation possibilities are underway.

- The weeding of most of the law library collections (with the exception of Vermont legal materials) and shifting collection responsibilities to the Vermont Law School have already been accomplished.
- Work is already underway to identify other materials that can be moved to the Vermont State Archives to enable enhanced public access. In some instances, ownership of materials will simply be transferred to the Archives. In the case of the Historic Vermont Newspaper microfilm resources, the physical materials will be transferred to afford better public access, but the Department of Libraries will continue to own and update the collection.
- Work is also underway to discontinue the VTLIB’s services as a Federal Document Depository, a service which first began in 1845. The Department is currently considered to be a medium-sized “partial” depository. The University of Vermont’s Bailey/Howe Library is the largest, most comprehensive Federal Document Depository in Vermont. The fact that there is already a larger, more complete, depository in the State coupled with online access to most Federal resources will ensure ongoing access to these resources. The Department may want to consider collecting federal documents in electronic format.

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Recommendation # 3

Work toward the consolidation of all services under one roof. At the present time, VTLIB staff work out of three locations. Administrative offices, state library functions, and the Children's Book Exhibit Center are located in Montpelier in the Pavilion Building. The Special Services Unit (Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped), deposit/rotating collections for libraries, and some staff development/training events for local libraries are located at the Midstate Library Service Center in Berlin. The other library service centers that existed in outlying parts of the State have been victims of earlier budget reductions, and the last consultant field office (Bellows Falls) will be closed in April. While the facility in Berlin is far from ideal, it is not without some redeeming qualities. The Center's two biggest assets are space and parking. The consultants believe that all consulting and staff development/continuing education activities should be relocated to Berlin in the near future and that as the service to State government function moves to a digital model, serious consideration should be given to relocating all VTLIB services in a single facility (either an expansion/renovation of the Berlin facility or in a different facility in central Vermont).

Recommendation # 4

Consolidate remaining collections to facilitate more efficient collection management. The VTLIB currently houses a variety of different collections in several locations. There are distinct collections in several different areas of the Pavilion Building while other collections are housed at the Midstate Library Service Center in Berlin. Some collections currently housed at the Pavilion Building could immediately be relocated to Berlin. Included would be the Children's Book Exhibit Center collection and the professional "Library Science" collection. As other collections are weeded, distributed, and otherwise downsized, consideration should also be given to locating these resources under one roof. With the exception of a few specific areas including large print materials and a core collection of literature for children and young adults, the Midstate Library's collection of materials used for bulk loans and "fill-in" collections is becoming increasingly outdated and obsolete. Funding has not been available to purchase new materials. While the collection still serves a purpose, this service should be phased out over the next three to five years.

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Recommendation # 5

Explore “contracting out” the fulfillment function of the Special Services (Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped - LBPH) Unit. As was alluded to earlier, the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped service is a partnership between the Federal government and the states. The Library of Congress provides recorded books and specialized playback devices to “regional libraries” located in the states. The Federal government also allows the free mailing of these materials (both ways) from regional libraries to qualified users of the service. There are basically five components of the LBPH service:

- Materials housing, organization and fulfillment
- Machine fulfillment and repair
- Reader’s advisory service
- Outreach services
- Local recording program

It is fairly common among states to outsource materials housing and fulfillment and/or machine fulfillment and repair. The consultants recommend the exploration of this model to evaluate the costs and benefits involved. The Special Services Unit is operating with skeletal staff at the moment. An evaluation of outsourcing should commence as soon as possible.

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Recommendation # 6

Remain in the Agency of Administration for the near future. The consultants believe that there is a case to be made for the location of the Department of Libraries in a number of different places in Vermont's governmental structure. This is due to the fact that the VTLIB plays several different important roles that have different audiences. Some services are directed inward (toward state government). Other services are directed outward to local libraries and individual communities. The consultants believe that the Department of Libraries should remain in the Agency of Administration until the new digital model of services to State government is fully implemented. This component of service is clearly aligned with the administrative agencies purposes and goals. Consideration of a relocation of the VTLIB should be delayed until the department's reorganization and co-location is complete. At that time a reassessment should be performed to determine whether an alignment with another agency is warranted.

Recommendation # 7

Increase capacity for data collection and reporting and financial management. A significant portion of the funding that flows to the Department of Libraries comes through the Library Services and Technology Act's Grants to States program. The Federal agency that administers the LSTA program (The Institute of Museum and Library Services - IMLS) pointed out Vermont's shortfalls in grants management during a recent program audit. The review "recommended that a staff person be hired to handle the grants program." The consultants concur with this finding and recommend that a new position, reporting directly to the State Librarian, should be created to fill this need at the first opportunity. The person in this position would handle all grants management, including grants awarded to public libraries from the Vermont Public Library Foundation. The consultants further recommend that this new position be created as soon as possible.

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Recommendation # 8

A new organization structure should be adopted that organizes the VTLIB into two divisions. One division, Library Advancement Services, would concentrate on working with local libraries to help build their capacity to serve their communities in the most efficient and effective ways possible. The Special Services Unit and outreach to populations with special needs would also be included in this division. A second division, Information & Access Services would house two somewhat different functions. The first is a re-envisioned service to State government agencies and State employees. As was previously described, this unit would move away from its existing base in physical (print-on-paper – book) resources and would move to a digital services model. The second function of the Information & Access Services Division is designed to promote and facilitate resource sharing between and among libraries of all types (public, school, and academic). At the heart of this function is a new and vastly improved Vermont Automated Library Service (VALS). The Request for Proposals for this upgraded system has already been released.

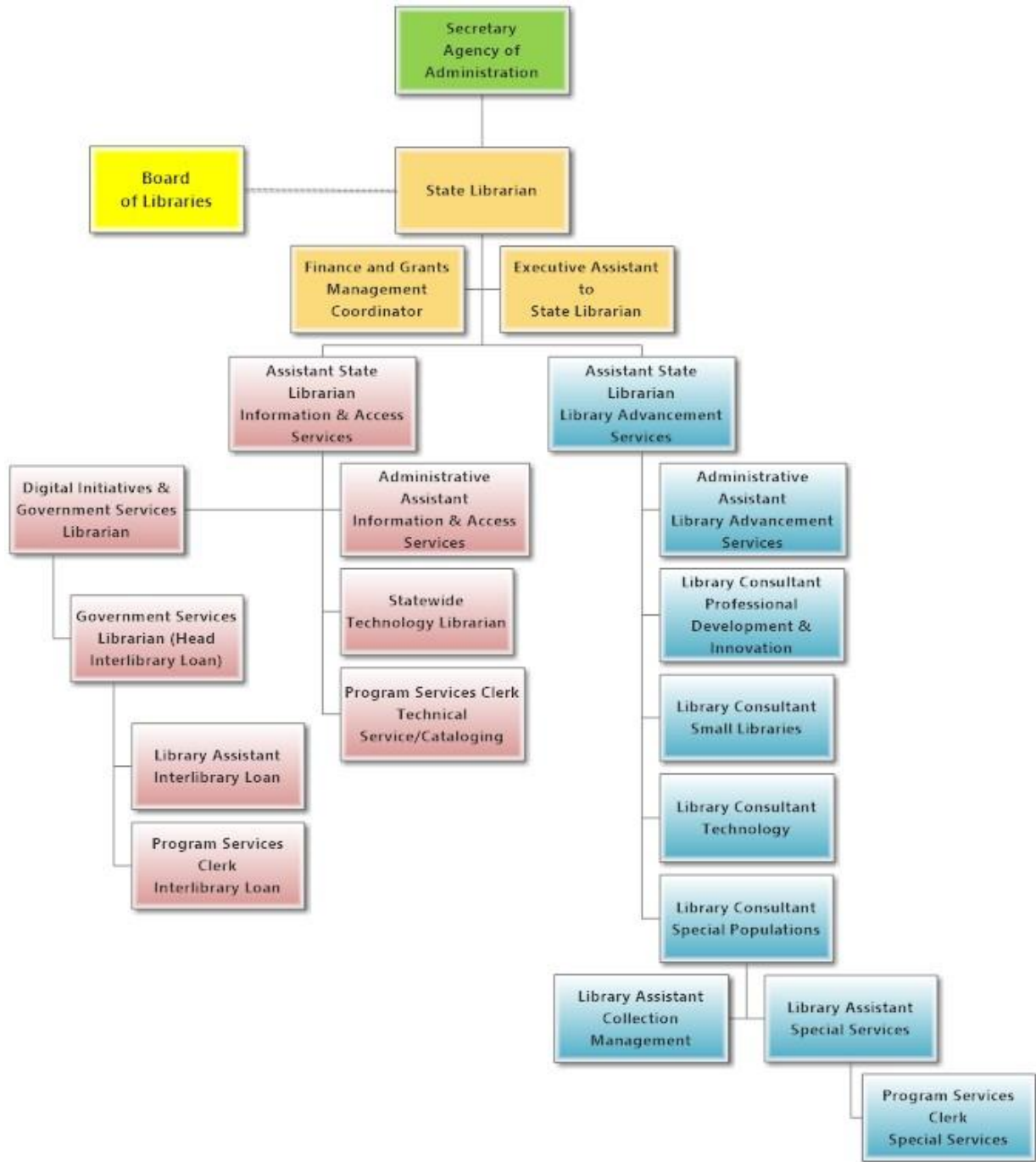
Proposed Reorganization

Several assumptions have been made in arriving at the reorganization recommendation presented below.

- 1.) It is unlikely that funding sufficient to rebuild two of the Department of Libraries' major collections and online resources (Law/Legal, Public Policy) will be available in the foreseeable future. The consultants have concluded that attempting to continue the public services related to responsibilities 1 and 3 (Law Library and Library Services to State Government) specified in 22 V.S.A. §605 denies the inevitable reality that these services are becoming increasingly marginal in value and will eventually become irrelevant.

- 2.) It is unlikely that funding sufficient to rebuild the "General" collection of the Department of Libraries will be available in the foreseeable future. The consultants have concluded that attempting to continue providing access to the general collections located at the Midstate Library Service Center (with some overflow located in the Pavilion Building in Montpelier) (responsibility 4 specified in 22 V.S.A. §605) denies the inevitable reality that this service is being used by a small and decreasing number of libraries and that it is becoming increasingly marginal in value and will eventually become irrelevant.

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Administration

As was suggested in Recommendation # 6 the consultants support the continued alignment of the Department of Libraries with the Agency of Administration. The Board of Libraries would continue as an advisory board to the State Librarian. The consultants question whether “geographic naming” is a function that is consistent with other Board of Libraries duties, and recommend that the State Librarian begin exploring a new model for the State to perform this function.

Four individuals would report directly to the State Librarian. They are:

- Executive Assistant
- Finance and Grants Management Coordinator
- Assistant State Librarian for Information and Access Services
- Assistant State Librarian for Library Advancement Services

The Finance and Grants Management Coordinator would also fulfill responsibilities for the Department’s Results-Based Accountability (RBA) program, and other data collection and management.

Information & Access Services

Four individuals would report to the Assistant State Librarian for Information & Access Services. They are:

- Administrative Assistant to provide support throughout the Division at the Assistant State Librarian’s direction
- Digital Initiatives & Government Services Librarian
- Statewide Technology Librarian
- Technical Services/Cataloging Clerk

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The Digital Initiatives and Government Services Librarian would head an exciting new unit that, among other things, would work directly with State agencies to help identify existing resources used by agencies (digital and print), would identify resources from counterpart agencies in other states, would identify any duplication of licensing of electronic resources among agencies, and would work to develop a portal(s) to improve access to useful electronic information sources. The Librarian would work directly with state agencies and could actively provide recommendations for resources, as well as training on effective online searching and use of digital resources and subscription-based databases. Of course, this transition from the print to digital model will require additional investment for the purchase and licensing of content.

The Statewide Technology Librarian would head the upgraded Vermont Automated Library System (VALS), coordinate statewide technology projects, explore, recommend and implement emerging technologies, and coordinate e-rate services on behalf of public libraries.

Some employees in this division would also have responsibility for training/professional development for local library staff.

Library Advancement Services

Five individuals would report directly to the Assistant State Librarian for Library Advancement Services. They are:

- Administrative Assistant to provide support throughout the Division at the Deputy's direction
- Library Consultant for Professional Development and Innovation
- Library Consultant for Small Libraries
- Library Consultant for Technology
- Library Consultant for Special Populations

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The Assistant State Librarian for Library Advancement Services would serve as the State's Library Services and Technology Act Coordinator and would also act as the lead consultant to the Vermont's larger public libraries. All library consultants would have training responsibilities. Himmel & Wilson envisions the VTLIB's role in professional development increasing significantly through workshops held on-site at the VTLIB's headquarters, on-site in libraries throughout the state, and increasingly through webinars/virtual classes/presentations.

The Library Consultant for Special Populations would focus on services to children. While most of the work would relate to public library services to children, the Library Consultant for Special Populations would, to the extent possible, serve as a liaison between and among public libraries, school libraries and VTLIB. The individual in this position would also supervise the Special Services Unit (Library for the Blind) as well as services to state institutions.

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Changes Necessary to Implement Proposed Reorganization

The transition from the existing organizational configuration to the proposed structure will require some changes and reclassifications. These changes are summarized in the chart that appears on the next page.

Only one new position would be required. This is the Finance and Grants Management position. Based on a review of similar positions in other departments in Vermont State government, the consultants recommend that this position be at Pay Grade 23 (PG-23).

A reclassification of the existing Head of State Library Services from PG-28 to PG-29 would also be necessary to achieve a parallel construction that reflects an equal distribution of work responsibilities between the two division heads.

The consultants recommend a review of four other positions for possible reclassification. They are:

- Library Consultant – Professional Development & Innovation
- Library Consultant – Small Libraries
- Library Consultant – Technology
- Government Services Librarian/Head, Interlibrary Loan

All four of these positions are currently at PG-22; however, the combination of the downsizing of the department and addition of new functions under the proposed reorganization raises concerns that existing classifications are too low.

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Summary of Required Changes

Title	Pay Grade	Status
State Librarian	PG-76 Exempt	Existing Position
Executive Assistant to State Librarian	PG-97 Exempt	Existing Position
Finance and Grants Management Coordinator	PG-23	NEW POSITION REQUEST
Assistant State Librarian - Library Advancement Services	PG-29	NEW HIRE
Administrative Assistant - Library Advancement Services	PG-18	RECRUITING NOW
Library Consultant - Professional Development & Innovation	Reclass. Now PG-22	Existing Position
Library Consultant - Small Libraries	Reclass. Now PG-22	Existing Position
Library Consultant - Technology	Reclass. Now PG-22	Existing Position
Library Consultant - Special Populations	PG-26	Existing Position
Library Assistant - Special Services	PG-18	Existing Position
Program Services Clerk - Special Services	PG-15	Existing Position
Library Assistant - Collection Management	PG-18	Existing Position
Assistant State Librarian - Information & Access Services	Reclass Director of State Library Services from PG-28 to PG-29.	NEW HIRE
Administrative Assistant - Information & Access Services	PG-18	Existing Position
Statewide Technology Librarian	PG-28	Existing Position
Digital Initiatives & Government Services Librarian	PG-28	Existing Position
Government Services Librarian (Head, Interlibrary Loan)	Reclass. Now PG-22	NEW HIRE
Library Assistant - Interlibrary Loan	PG-18	Existing Position
Program Services Clerk - Interlibrary Loan	PG-15	Existing Position
Program Services Clerk - Technical Services/Cataloging	PG-15	Existing Position

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