

## Self-Assessment for State Ecosystem Continuum

As you consider how to strengthen or launch a library ecosystem effort in your state, this checklist will help you see quickly the kinds of things to work on. The Continuum offers much more detail about how to grow from Beginning to Evolving to Highly Effective. Even if you already have a strong ecosystem, you might find ways to improve it. There is no one right way to do this - these are just prompts to support your thinking.



**Leadership** for building a state-wide library ecosystem is dependent upon an awareness of and active collaboration with various and diverse library partners. Leadership must facilitate connections across library types as the multiplicity of library types *is* the ecosystem. Leadership refers to the expertise of representatives from participating groups, intentionality around building an inclusive model for participation, and the skills participants offer in communication and collaboration towards a sustainable ecosystem effort.

- Our organization understands the goals/priorities/importance of a state ecosystem.
- We also understand the essential nature of an inclusive and diverse membership on the ecosystem team.
- We have begun to engage with related organizations to build an ecosystem.
- We are actively working to understand the perspective of other organizations within the ecosystem.
- We are working to build broader understanding within our individual organizations and generate broad support for participation.
- We consistently support opportunities to communicate/plan/work together in support of a strong state ecosystem (advocacy committees, etc.).

**Communication** requires clear, intentional sharing both internally and across participating organizations. It builds a unified voice and advances a shared advocacy and legislative agenda that reflects the goals of diverse stakeholders.

- We have reached out to representatives of other library organizations.
- We encourage ongoing communications between our association leadership and colleagues in other organizations.
- We hold regular meetings to move ecosystem agenda items forward.
- We report regularly (at least annually) to the boards of our organizations about ecosystem efforts.
- We have a current list of key contacts for all statewide library organizations to facilitate communication about the developing priorities of the ecosystem effort. We are working to maintain relationships among all participating organizations through these key contacts.
- We are building a current inclusive and diverse list of essential contacts in the legislature and similar policy and decision making bodies so that we know who to contact as issues arise and legislative or advocacy agendas are written. We are working cross-organizationally to build and maintain relationships with these people.
- We collaborate to develop a single, consistent message about our organizations' shared priorities.
- We speak publicly with one voice to our stakeholders; to legislators, decision and policy makers;

and to the public.

- ❑ We work together to respond to any crises that arise, recognizing that we are stronger when we all stand together.

**Collaboration** towards a unified advocacy and legislative agenda and consistent messaging requires careful and consistent coordination among all participants that reflects the overlapping needs of all the contributing organizations.

- ❑ We understand our shared priorities as we develop shared agendas that interweave the priorities of all for a solid platform that reflects the diverse needs and goals across the ecosystem.
- ❑ We regularly share back to the leadership of participating organizations new collaborative understandings of ecosystem interrelationships and priorities.
- ❑ We encourage participating organizations to directly collaborate with one another.
- ❑ We work with ALA and ecosystem leaders in other states to discover and share ideas.
- ❑ We collaborate to build and maintain a current advocacy and legislative agenda that reflects shared priorities and a unified voice.
- ❑ As priorities and methods are refined, representatives check back with their own organizations for clarity and ongoing support of robust shared advocacy and legislative agendas.
- ❑ The ecosystem team supports creation and distribution of polished public-facing resources to explain the shared agenda in ways the public can easily support.

**Sustainability** of the ecosystem requires equitable access to participation as well as ongoing attention to simple and essential aspects of teamwork.

- ❑ Our ecosystem effort includes policies that support ongoing engagement of all participating organizations.
- ❑ We emphasize the benefits of consistent representation on the ecosystem team and encourage participating organizations to support, or even require, representation.
- ❑ We have established policies that team members hold regular terms and stagger rotation to ensure continuity of practices and knowledge.
- ❑ We work with the leadership of our organizations to ensure new representatives are appointed according to the agreed schedule.
- ❑ We mentor ecosystem awareness in organization leadership as an ongoing priority.
- ❑ We mentor new representatives to the ecosystem team as they gain an understanding of the whole ecosystem and all of its stakeholders and connections.
- ❑ We work together to establish this ecosystem team as an official point of collaboration between the interested organizations, with a constant focus on inclusivity to best benefit the member groups.
- ❑ We have and maintain an ecosystem calendar that reflects cyclic deadlines in order to plan for appropriate action. We update this calendar regularly, adding any useful information that supports the agenda-building process.
- ❑ Representatives review ecosystem efforts after any milestone date (final advocacy agenda item, legislative success, etc.), in order to seed new ideas for methods and/or content.