Organizational Profile: Health Sciences Libraries Consortium (HSLC)

HSLC was organized in 1985 and incorporated as a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) corporation in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in January 1988. Originally founded to support the automation goals of Pennsylvania’s medical school libraries, its role as a manager and provider of information services and programs for public and school libraries has replaced its original mission. HSLC now serves over 2100 K-12 school libraries, 450 public libraries and 200 academic and special libraries in Pennsylvania. Through direct public services as well as services provided through its participating libraries, HSLC reaches all citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which has a population of 12.6 million and an area of 46,000 square miles. It serves through its programs for public and school libraries, nearly 6 million public library card holders and over 2 million K-12 students in public and private schools.

Governed by a nine-member representative Board of Directors elected by its members, the mission of HSLC is to “[promote] access to information for the citizens of the Commonwealth by developing, marketing, and delivering quality information services to libraries through leadership, education, technical expertise and infrastructure.” This mission statement is included in the HSLC Strategic Plan as amended and adopted by the HSLC Board on October 29, 2010.

Among the organization’s milestones are:

- 1987 - received an $8.6 million 5-year grant from The Pew Charitable Trusts
- 1989 - provided the first Internet access service for libraries in Pennsylvania
- 1991 - hosted a MEDLINE database service for libraries in Pennsylvania
- 1992 - implemented a cooperative integrated library system for 6 medical schools
- 1993 - purchased a 4000 square foot office condominium in Philadelphia
- 1994 -1999 - provided website, listserv hosting, and other automated services
- 2000 - won bid for developing a state union catalog and interlibrary loan system
- 2004 - won bid to manage state POWER Library subscription database service
- 2005 - implemented a statewide digitized collection hosting service
- 2006 - implemented the Ask Here PA statewide virtual reference service
- 2008 - celebrated 20th anniversary of services to Pennsylvania libraries
- 2010 - received $450,000 grant to implement an Evergreen open source system

Among HSLC’s near-term goals are:

- Integrate a VuFind discovery search interface with the Evergreen integrated library system, extend participation in the system from an initial 40 public libraries to additional public libraries throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and to integrate this and other statewide electronic library services to provide a single point of contact for library users in Pennsylvania
- Implement a standardized content management system for the websites of Pennsylvania public libraries

HSLC’s website is located at www.accesspa.org.