National Network of Libraries of Medicine Greater Midwest Region: Determining Outreach Impact

by Jacqueline Leskovec

The Greater Midwest Region (GMR) of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (NN/LM) is over one-thousand members strong and extends across the ten states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota and Wisconsin. One of eight Regional Medical Libraries across the United States, the GMR is charged with supporting the mission of NN/LM: to advance the progress of medicine and improve public health by providing all U.S. health professionals with equal access to biomedical information and improving the public’s access to information to enable them to make informed decisions about their health care.

One of the ways that the GMR staff work to achieve these efforts is by awarding a variety of subcontracts and awards to its members to provide outreach on behalf of the GMR. During the current five-year contract (2006-2011) with the National Library of Medicine (NLM), the GMR has funded health sciences, academic and public libraries as well as community based and other organizations to promote health information access. Through the creativity and talent of GMR network members, constituents in our region have benefited from outreach and training activities brought to them by local partners and funded by the GMR.

A currently funded project is with the School of Library and information Science at the University of Kentucky in Lexington. Graduate library students under the guidance of a faculty member, have been working on a two-phase project to plan and implement a study on the impact of the GMR's funding program on the ability of Network members to perform outreach on behalf of the NN/LM. Entitled Learning by Doing: Engaging LIS Students in an Outreach Impact Study, Phase I—the writing of the proposal to analyze these outreach efforts—has been completed. Students are now implementing the outreach impact study that was proposed in Phase I. Twenty-two GMR-funded outreach projects are to be analyzed.

For more information about GMR-funded projects, see: Funding Opportunities (http://nnlm.gov/gmr/funding/).

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