Feedback Requested on FY2025 IHLS Operational Plan and Budget(s)

Please provide your feedback for the FY2025 IHLS Operational Plan and Budget(s)

Registered (11) Unregistered (1)

12 statements

Name not available (registered)
April 24, 2024, 1:28 PM

With the continued revenue issues and deficit being faced, are automated sorters the best use of funds and will they make that large of a difference?

4 Supporters Support this statement; 4 Connected Statements

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin

Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. There are multiple reasons why we are considering an AMHS. Among them are the resultant savings in IHLS delivery sorting personnel costs, projected at approximately $1.3 million and $1.9 million over the next ten years. As the number of items that circulate through interlibrary loan (ILL) increases, the number of sorting hours we need in our budget also increases. The AMHS would dramatically accelerate the sorting process, reducing the number of required sorting hours and leading to savings in the personnel budget.

For a full breakdown of the financial details and benefits of purchasing the machines, please visit our website.


https://www.illinoisheartland.org/services/delivery/amh

Name not available (registered)
April 24, 2024, 2:14 PM

I also wonder whether the spending of approx. $500,000 --for AMHS machines is worth the price for a few headaches that libraries might experience in the movement of materials. I think the process is fine and the turn around does not create problems for our patrons. If there is a potential budget problem, why bring on a large debt where other monies can be used where they are really needed.

3 Supporters Support this statement; 2 Connected Statements

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin
Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. There are multiple reasons why we are considering an AMHS, first and foremost to alleviate staffing issues and sorting delays related to high staff turnover in our sorting positions. We have already received complaints regarding the time for patrons to receive their materials, and if the volume of items continues to increase as expected, then patron delays will only get longer. We have reserve funds available to cover the substantial initial investment into the AMHS, and this expense will be offset by reduced labor costs that otherwise continue to increase into the future. If you would like to learn more about why we're looking at automated sorting machines, you'll find more information, including an in-depth Q&A, on our website under Services >> Delivery >> AMHS Project.

https://www.illinoisheartland.org/services/delivery/amhs

Name not available (registered)
April 24, 2024, 1:32 PM

The library system is headed down the wrong track, in a lot of ways. Many of your ideas are expensive and do nothing to help the clients you're supposed to be serving. You keep focusing on "marketing presence? You're the only library system south of I-80. Where's your competition? You do not know how obscene these activities seem to those of us struggling to manage on bare-bones budget. Regarding outgoing board video testimonials -- I never trust any of those, because you only pick out someone who will glow about you. And, you'll spend money on this too. Again, where's your competition and why do you need these? It seems like there is a complete disconnect between the IHLS Board/management and what the membership actually needs. It seems like you're more interested in entertaining the "trendy mindset" rather than getting the library staffs what we actually need to serve our patrons.

3 Supporters Support this statement; 4 Connected Statements

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin

Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. Our focus on member outreach and promoting the services we offer ("marketing presence" as you phrased it) isn't about competition. It's about showcasing the incredible resources and programs we offer to our member libraries! There is a direct and strong correlation between how much and how well we promote our programs and services and how much they're used. For example, in April 2022, we rebranded our Delivery On the Go Service, purchasing new, eye-catching orange bags with the service logo. The result was a 52% increase in service use, substantially increasing patrons' access to same-day delivery.

Additionally, our marketing communications staff serves as a resource for our members. If you'd like to learn more about how your library can better promote itself, please contact our marketing communications staff through our website, www.illinoisheartland.org >> Services >> Consulting.

https://www.illinoisheartland.org/about/board/election-hub

Name not shown (registered)
April 29, 2024, 10:55 AM

The AMHS is an investment in the future financial stability of IHLS (via reduced staff costs). The AMHS also helps ensure more efficient and consistent delivery by mitigating staffing issues. Resource sharing is up and it will continue to go up. The volume IHLS must process is staggering. This project will pay dividends long term even though it hurts (financially) in the moment. IHLS has reserves built up for just this type of project.

2 Supporters Support this statement; 3 Connected Statements

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin
Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. We are excited to see an increase in resource sharing within our system. AMHS is a tool that will help absorb this increase's impact and will pay for itself in the long term.

Name not available (registered)
April 26, 2024, 1:25 PM

Thank you for putting together a well-organized draft for review! I know many are concerned about the logistics and if the cost is justifiable; however, I believe the AMH system will be invaluable to IHLS. There will be a learning curve, as there always is with changes, but we librarians are problem-solvers. I'm grateful that IHLS is investing in its member libraries.

2 Supporters Support this statement; 3 Connected Statements

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin

Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. We recognize that change can bring challenges, and we value your willingness to work through them with us. We are excited to see the positive impact our initiatives will have on your library and the people it serves.

Name not available (registered)
April 25, 2024, 2:39 PM

I've read the details on AMH website and I've heard some of the comments from other libraries that are worried about change with this project. I agree that change can be hard and no one wants any additional work. Is the issue that you don't like change? IHLS is willing to help us move the barcodes. The page shows that their budget will see personnel savings if this is purchased. It's not an additional expense if they are paying for it by the personnel savings over the years. This is a way to save money in the long term AND get items to us quicker. Have you read the information they posted?

2 Supporters Support this statement; 3 Connected Statements

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin

Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plans. We truly appreciate your patience and enthusiasm regarding the upcoming changes that will allow us to continue providing quality service to our members.

Name not shown (registered)
April 24, 2024, 2:55 PM

The FY25 Operational plan and budget are well aligned with the core values of the organization. The decision to add new methods/equipment to enhance service to members is a step in the right direction. An organization of this type cannot stagnate, or else it fails to remain relevant to their members. The transparency in the budget only shows that the organization is managing the funds provide well. Change is hard from many to grasp, but without change we cannot grow.

2 Supporters Support this statement; 3 Connected Statements

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin

Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. We value your understanding and support, and we're pleased that some of our initiatives will make a difference to your library and patrons.
Why would a Board of Directors approve a budget with a deficit of $2 million dollars? How can the AMH benefit IHLS members? According to the members they are not unhappy with the current delivery service. The latest Member Matters meeting indicated that it would be another year before IHLS would be prepared to handle the process. Why even have the machines in this budget for this year when there are no long term statistics to show need, just projections. A reason given to purchase the machines was not being able to keep staff. Staffing issues are not new and will not be solved by a machine. With the other 1.2 million deficit it is hard to see how many of these expenditures will help the members, it seems to be centered on many expenditures that benefit the top portion of workers in the library system. An example is professional development and the number of people from IHLS that repeatedly attend. Many IHLS member libraries would benefit from attending just one activity. ...

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin

Thank you for taking the time to review our draft budget and operational plan for FY2025. We appreciate your concern regarding staff retention and development at IHLS. Both are top priorities as these issues relate to our stewardship of funds and our ability to serve our members. We want to assure you that the high staff turnover in our sorting positions is no cause for alarm. For bridge jobs like these, high turnover is typical. Meanwhile, we are careful to invest in the development of our long-term, professional staff. Attending conferences and site visits is vital to staying updated on emerging trends and technologies, best practices, and staff education, which helps us provide quality service to our members. Our staff are committed to ongoing CE that allows them to share these new ideas and tools with members on Third Thursdays, Member Day, and other IHLS CE events.

The points expressed regarding the AMHS are similar to a comment posted on May 2. Please take a look at that reply. If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Leslie Bednar, at lbednar@illinoisheartland.org. Thank you again for your thoughtful comments.

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin

Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. Every element of our budget is designed to provide services to our members. A reduction in any one area of the budget may lead to reduced services for our members. Like you, we do not want to see that happen. We understand that the deficit amount expressed in the draft budget can seem alarming. As noted in the budget narrative, most of the deficit is for a one-time purchase that will help reduce IHLS's future expenses. It will also free up more resources for all our core services. The library systems are funded through the System Area and Per Capita (SAPG) funds to provide the following core services to our members as detailed in 23 ILAC 3030.215. (Standards for Core Services to Members) Over half of our SAPG funds are allocated to the Delivery portion of the General fund budget. The AMHS is proposed as a solution to reduce the impact of delivery on the General Fund budget and to utilize the savings for other services. And, at the latest Members Matter meeting, IHLS staff indicated that we would be open to changing the implementation date to allow our member libraries enough time to adjust.

If you would like to learn more about why we are looking at automated sorting machines, and all the possible benefits for members and IHLS, you will find lots of information, including an in-depth Q&A, on our website under Services >> Delivery >> AMHS Project.
https://www.illinoisheartland.org/services/delivery/amhs
Our Marketing and Communications services fit into the core member services we are charged by statute to supply. Communications to all system members regarding IHLS services and member opportunities is essential to member success. We have detailed information regarding member services here: https://www.illinoisheartland.org/services

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Executive Director, Leslie Bednar, at lbednar@illinoisheartland.org. Thank you again for your thoughtful comments.

Name not shown (registered)
May 1, 2024, 11:46 AM

The budget statements and narratives are well reasoned. The AMHS is a large investment to ensure the core of our services remains efficient and able to keep up with increasing amounts of materials.

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin
Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. We appreciate your feedback.
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| Registered (11) | Unregistered (1) |

12 statements

Name not available (unregistered)
April 26, 2024, 12:58 PM

If IHLS is willing to help move the barcodes, I say it is worth the headache. I do believe if you don’t change, you will stagnate. I don’t like change, but am willing for it.

Name not available (registered)
April 24, 2024, 1:33 PM

The IHLS Operation Plan and Budgets document is well written and looks like the plan will be successful.

Message from IHLS Open Town Hall Admin

Thank you for reviewing our draft FY2025 budget and operational plan. We appreciate your feedback.