A Guide to Using LibPAS

LibPAS is the tool utilized by Public Library Services Branch (PLSB) in collecting the information for the Public Library Survey and Annual Report.   It is an easy-to-use, entirely Web-based utility developed by Counting Opinions. No special software is required on your computer, and the system should work with any recent Web browser, including Firefox, Safari, Chrome, and Opera, as well as Internet Explorer, with CSS, images and JavaScript options enabled, as is typical.

Steps to Completing Your Survey and Annual Report

Completing the survey and annual report involves several steps, only one of which is entering the data online. The steps include:

1. Collect information required to complete the survey and annual report. Check http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/plsb_survey_and_annual_report.cfm for information and resources and be sure to review the *Companion Guide* for instructions and definitions.

2. Enter the data on the site as required, print out drafts as necessary, and review the data entered. When you are comfortable that the data is entered properly, present the draft to your library board for approval.

3. Once approved, enter the date in the appropriate field on the report. Submit the report in LibPAS and print the report for your records.

Getting Started

Usually in December the library manager/director (or other designated survey respondent) will receive an email from PLSB announcing when the forms are ready to use. The message will include the link to access the site (http://ab.countingopinions.com), as well as the *username* and *password* to be used. Bookmark the site so that you can return to it in the future, and note that passwords are only changed when there is a new respondent.

Figure 1. The LibPAS portal for Alberta.

Logging in

To login, enter the username and password you received by email (if you do not have a username/password, or if it is not allowing you to log in, email libraries@gov.ab.ca). After login, you will be taken directly to the Data Input form for your library's annual report.

Figure 2. Portal screen after login.

You should be presented with a screen similar to the one above showing the statistical data collection for your library for the reporting period (be sure that the *Period* is set to the current reporting year).

Next, you may need to choose your location from the *Location* drop down menu. If your location is not selected (either manually or by default), you will not be able to enter any data.

Figure 3. Selecting your location.

Navigating the Form

There are features to navigate and complete the form (a.k.a. Data Input). Data is stored as entered, and permanently retained when you click *Save*.

There are two ways to navigate through the Data Input form:

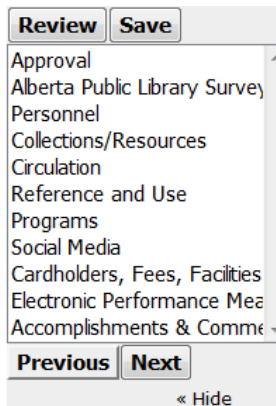1) **Select the name of the section from the list on the left side of the form.**

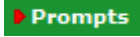*Figure 4. List of report sections, seen on the left side of the Data Input form.*

You can "hide" the list by clicking on the *Hide* link. To restore the section navigation box, click the chevron symbol (>>). Use the *Next* and *Previous* buttons to proceed through the Data Input form, one section at a time.

2) **Select the *Review* button, , to display all the sections on one page.**

Proceed through each field on the Data Input form by selecting the target field using your mouse or by using the *Tab* or *Enter* key to proceed through fields one at a time.

To see the definition for any item in the form, click the name of the data input field to reveal more information. (For more information see *Indicator Notes (Definitions)* on page 6).

A complete list of definitions for all data fields is available by clicking the *Prompts* button at the top right side of the form.

Entering Data

You do not have to complete the sections sequentially. Nor do you need to complete individual sections before moving on to other sections.

The Data Input form supports various features to ensure the quality and integrity of the data. Throughout the form, you may encounter the following:

- **Edit checks** - edit checks ensure that entered values are within an acceptable range. If they are not, the user will be prompted to provide an explanation using the *Notes* icon ( ). Fields with edit checks are indicated on the form with a green checkmark ( ).

- **Select lists -** limited set of valid values is presented for selection in a drop down list format.

- **Pre-filled values** - Data Input fields may already contain data, especially when data for previous periods is available and the data often does not change from period-to-period.

- **Previous period values** - typically displayed to the right of the data input field for reference.

- **Required fields –** data must be entered in the field in order to submit to PLSB.

- **Comment fields –** these boxes may be expanded by clicking in the bottom right corner and dragging it to the desired size (horizontally and/or vertically).

Figure 5. Expanding the comment field.

Indicator Notes (Definitions)

By selecting the hyperlinked name of any *data input* field, you can view more information, including a complete definition of the data field, the expected value and other details.

Figure 6. Indicator notes pop-up. Enter your own notes in the Notes field.

Users can enter notes that are helpful in understanding or localizing the definitions provided. For example, the notes might explain where the values are locally sourced, who can provide the data or anything that would assist users involved in approving data sets or entering data in subsequent periods.

You can record as many notes as required. These notes are for local use only and will not be shared with other participating libraries.

Each note is date and timed stamped for ease of reference.

Performance Indicator (PI) Value Notes

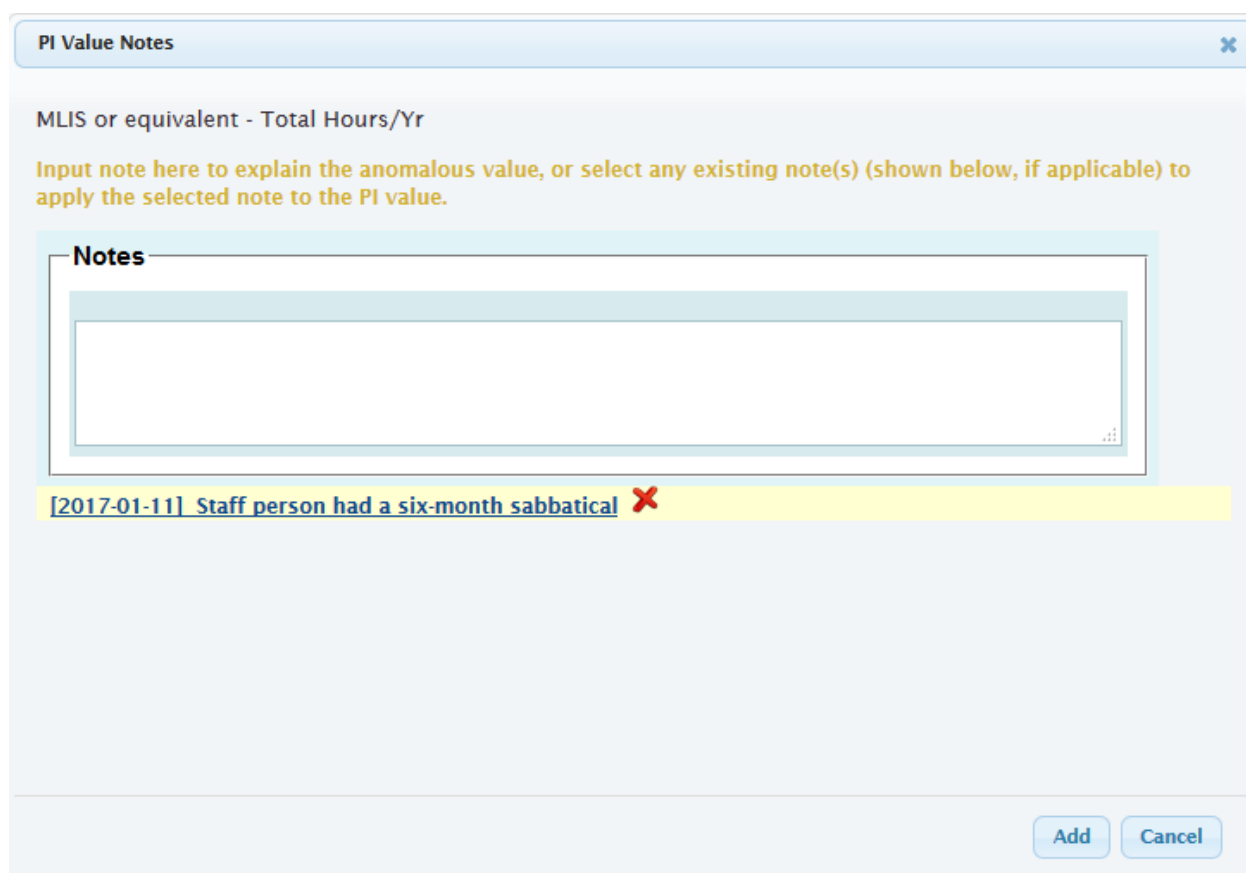By clicking on the *Add Notes* icon ( ), explanations can be added to the data values.

Figure 7. PI Value notes pop-up. Enter your own notes in the Notes field.

These notes are designed to help you explain or interpret the data submitted, particularly when the data is considered anomalous or abnormal. For instance, when the data represents a significant change from the values previously reported.

Providing explanations is useful to those responsible for approving or vetting the data submitted and for those that might later reject or discount the results without a plausible explanation.

If there is data in a Notes field, the icon colour will change from grey ( ) to orange ( ).

Locking

You should use the *Verify* button when the data Input process is complete, as you may be required to enter *Edit Check* information that was missed before. Once all data has been entered, verified and approved by the library board, click the *Submit to PLSB* button. This will lock the form, and you will see a padlock icon in the top right corner of the form:
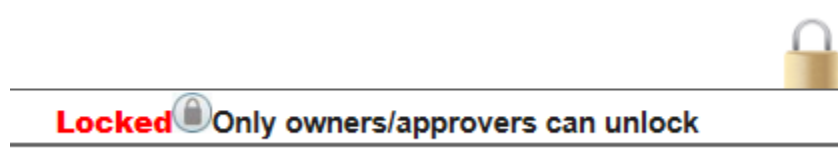

Figure 8. The report has been submitted to PLSB and is now locked.

Once the form is locked, you can no longer modify data for that period or unlock the form. If a change is required, contact PLSB to unlock the form so you can make any necessary changes.

If you have problems with the form or require assistance,

Contact Jen Anderson at jen.anderson@gov.ab.ca or 780-415-0294.