



March 5, 2004

In July and September of 2003, Allison Sampson facilitated three meetings for the California State Library concerning the needs and resources for cultural programs in public libraries.

Allison quickly grasped the purposes of the sessions and designed a valid focus group agenda, one for a representative group of rural library directors and one for a representative group of urban library directors. Although not a librarian herself, she led both sessions with great skill and knowledge. She was objective and probing in her questions, especially the follow-up ones, to ensure that we received the information we needed. She also diffused a hostile person in one of the sessions without even appearing to have done so. The meeting reports she prepared were thorough and excellent.

Because we were so impressed with her work, we asked her also to lead an all-day brainstorming and discussion session for the 29 directors and key people representing the largest and most influential cultural programming resources in California. This group had never met before, and Allison skillfully drew the brainstorming into the action agenda that we had hoped would emerge. By the end of the day, the group decided to reconvene later in the year for a multi-day working session to develop a cultural agenda and timeline for the state. As soon as that meeting is scheduled, we plan to ask Allison back to facilitate it.

In essence, Allison Sampson is a knowledgeable, objective, and skillful facilitator. I strongly recommend her to any other group and I look forward to working with her again myself.

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