American Samoa: Evaluation of Five Year Plan 2003-2007

I. <u>Introductory Statement and Summary of Impact of IMLS funds to Support State Library Services</u>

According to the American Samoa Department of Commerce 2006 Statistical Yearbook and the 2000 U.S. Census, American Samoa has a population of 68,200, with an average of 6.1 persons per household, and a median household income of $18,219. Approximately 61% of the population is below the national poverty level. One out of every ten families has a female head householder with children, and of the 3,889 grandparents reported to have lived with grandchildren, 71 per cent of them were responsible for childcare. Education statistics show 76% of the population has a high school diploma, and 7% of the population has a Bachelor's degree or higher.

The State Library/Feleti Barstow Public Library (FBPL) has created LSTA-funded programs to help improve computer, language and reading literacy skills from birth to senior citizens, through outreach programs to daycare centers, Early Childhood Education (ECE) centers, elementary schools, and the local senior citizen agency. LSTA funds have greatly improved electronic delivery of library services throughout the territory of American Samoa. The Online Union catalog represents the only electronic network of library and information services and during the last five years member sites have included the Feleti Barstow Public Library (FBPL), the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) library, the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office (ASHPO), the Department of Education (DOE) high school libraries, the Territorial Archives Office, the South Pacific Academy library, and the Kanana Fou Theological Seminary (KFTS) library.

A recent upgrade and expansion of the FBPL Computer Lab included new purchases for the Computer Lab, with the replaced computers being donated to the Territorial Administration Office on Aging (TAOA) where free computer classes are now offered onsite for senior citizens and their caretakers. Senior citizens are now able to communicate online with their children and grandchildren internationally, and those with children and grandchildren serving in the military in Iraq are especially grateful for the chance to have such quick, dependable and free interaction via e-mail. At the FBPL Computer Lab, classes have been expanded and lengthened to accommodate the constant requests for basic computer training from the public, private and government sectors and the FBPL still remains the only public venue that offers Internet-ready computers free of charge to the general public.

Local government funding has fluctuated throughout 2003-2007, and LSTA funds have played an important part in maintaining and improving services to the underserved communities by allowing increased outreach to remote communities, via personal staff visits and electronic delivery services via the Internet.

Professional development training to ensure accurate and faster service to library patrons continues with emphasis on computer skills, better digital retrieval services and providing effective literacy programs to underserved communities.

II. Overall Report of Results in Achieving Goals and Objectives Based on Five-Year Plan.

When the 2003-2007 Five Year Plan was written it included an overall strategy for Goals and Targets that included all funding – local, private, LSTA, and other government monies – and specific activities were identified on the plan as to what would be accomplished with LSTA funding.

In compliance with this requested evaluation, only those activities identified as 'LSTA activities' in the 2003 – 2007 Five Year Plan are included in this report.

Goal #1: Maintain the central public library with daytime, evening, and weekend hours, to serve as a center for life-long learning, and expand access to library and information services throughout the territory.

Objective/target #1:
Determine facility expansion needs and undertake capitol improvements as needed for improved library services, including expansion of the Computer Lab and computer services.

Progress towards goal:
☐ Surpassed the Goal

☑ Met this goal

☐ Made progress towards this goal

☐ Did not work toward this goal

Demands for computer services have kept the State Library/Feleti Barstow Public Library (FBPL) Computer Lab a busy educational hub since the day it opened. After assessing the need to increase the space and computers available for the public, local funding from the American Samoa Government Jobs and Growth Tax fund was secured to physically expand and renovate the FBPL Computer Lab. Twenty new computers were purchased and the 14 old computers were donated to the local Territorial Administration on Aging Office (TAOA) to establish a computer skills classroom on their site for the territory's senior citizens.

In the newly renovated FBPL Computer Lab, computer classes were expanded and lengthened from weekly single 2-hour sessions to the currently offered monthly class, held over a 2-week period. Responding to requests from public, private and government sectors, classes were developed to both enhance the work skills for currently employed persons, and to build computer

skills for students and job seekers. The demand for these classes increases every year, as does the use of the Computer Lab for patrons who need online computer access.

Over 1250 students have been trained in the Computer Lab since 2003. For the general public who use the Computer Lab and are not participating in a computer class, a yearly average of 11,176 patrons spend an annual average of 12,272 hours in the Computer Lab, primarily using and checking e-mail (63%) and Internet research and/or word processing (37%).

Computer classes continue to operate at maximum attendance levels, and class content remains flexible to be able to fully assist any group with a particular request for more advanced skills, e.g. PowerPoint presentations. Since the FBPL Systems Administrator is fluent in most software applications, these requests can be accomplished without having to invest any added time or personnel. The number of families who have computers in their homes remains far below the national U.S. average. Because of this, the FBPL computer lab is a vital service, which is frequently used by students of all levels from elementary to college, visitors to American Samoa, as well as adult residents who cannot afford their own computer and/or Internet service.

Objective/target #2 and 3:
- Open and maintain branch libraries.
- Establish and maintain a mobile library to expand services to remote villages and underserved communities including the elderly, vision impaired, and disabled.

Progress towards goal:

☐ Surpassed the Goal

☐ Met this goal

☑ Made progress towards these goals

☐ Did not work toward this goal

Research continues to be done into the feasibility of maintaining branch and mobile libraries, and currently the costs and staffing issues are prohibitive. Consideration was then given to expanding library services within an established government department, and after the expansion of the FBPL Computer Lab in 2005, the 14 computers being replaced were donated to the local Territorial Administration on Aging Office (TAOA).

Due to TAOA's extremely limited budget resources for any new programs, the Territorial Librarian negotiated with the local Internet and cell phone service provider Blue Sky, Inc to provide free Internet service for life for the TAOA office. Space was provided by TAOA so that the computers would be set up on a permanent basis and free classes are now being conducted on-site by TAOA staff for senior citizens ranging in age from 55 to 90 years old. Classes include basic computer maintenance, word processing, how to establish an e-mail account and Internet usage. Monthly classes covering 20 hours of instruction began in 2005, and over 150 senior

citizens have been awarded certificates for completing the course. The 'graduates' receive their certificates in a small ceremony at the end of each session, and by the request of the TAOA Director each ceremony has been covered by the local KVZK-TV station to give the seniors community recognition for their participation and to honor the class enrollees.

For over 95% of the participants, the class offers them their first chance to actually use an Internet-ready computer. Many had never touched a computer before they attended the TAOA class, but were encouraged by their families or caretakers to attend and learn. For most of them it was not a skill they even conceived of before the TAOA classes began.

Having the computer class located onsite at TAOA has been a tremendous incentive for seniors to experiment and learn to use the computers. The center is already a well established gathering site for seniors who usually work on handicrafts and interact at the TAOA center for regular social events throughout the year. The TAOA staff who serve as computer class instructors have years of computer use gained on the job and through their education in American Samoa, Hawaii and the U.S. and they are familiar faces who offer patience and humor and repeated instruction as needed, in a relatively stress-free environment for the seniors. TAOA staff and administration report that the computer classes have been an excellent learning experience for their constituents, and they are extremely happy and very grateful for the chance to use the computer without having to go out and purchase one, since many have no allowance for a computer in their home budgets. For those who are able to consider buying a computer, the class is a first step towards possibly bringing a computer into the home, or being able to use a computer already owned by another family member. By helping to demystify computers, many of them now have something more in common with the grandchildren they babysit everyday.

E-mail is by far the most used and appreciated service and all participants have learned to set up an e-mail account, compose messages, and type and send letters and e-mails to their families in American Samoa and abroad, and also to their sons and daughters in the military. Many could not imagine being able to be in such regular contact with their loved ones for free, and since mail service to the territory is often slow, and long distance phone calls still remain costly outside of the territory, e-mail is valued not only for its financial worth but for the ability to help renew and maintain ties with their relatives. TAOA staff report many of the seniors become very emotional when they receive the first responses to their e-mails, and on completion of the class they congratulate each other proudly. The certificate ceremonies are often accompanied by potluck celebrations organized by family members to commemorate their achievement. The classes have definitely enriched the lives of these seniors and helped bridge the digital divide by giving them the chance to see they can indeed learn about, and use, new technology, and it has helped them to reduce loneliness and strengthen and maintain their family ties through regular contact with children and relatives thousands of miles away.

GOAL 2: Actively provide for the territory's literacy needs of all age groups.

Objective/Target #1 and #2:
- Design reading and other language literacy programs and materials to meet the needs of all ages and include both English and Samoan languages and support and encourage other reading and literacy programs in the territory through professional collaborations.
- Develop and support the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage and cultural literacy through a variety of media including oral, print, electronic and digital reproduction programs.

Progress towards this goal:

☐ Surpassed the Goal

☐ Met this goal

☑ Made progress towards these goals

☐ Did not work toward this goal

Production of Samoan legends CDs and basic Samoan language course materials continues, with the collaboration of local Samoan language and cultural experts. Attendance for bi-lingual public storytelling events has increased and the first Samoan language children's book by a local author was launched at the FBPL, bringing in new faces to the public library for the first time who were interested in seeing a homegrown author and his book.

Bi-lingual children's programs have grown substantially during the last few years and currently include the Every Child Ready to Read project, outreach programs to Early Childhood Education (ECE) sites and daycare centers. Other media projects include the Polynesian Photo Archives, numerous book launches for local authors, and overall promotion of the literary projects being done on island. Other bi-lingual public events included the Scary Stories of Samoa storytellers showcase, rotating exhibits of local artists and art students from the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) and public schools, and the Annual Peace Poster Contest done in collaboration with the Lion's Club.

With the establishment of the Samoan Language Commission in American Samoa and the re-inclusion of Samoan language courses in the high schools, there is an increasing move to acquire and create more Samoan language learning tools. Partnering with those organizations dedicated to preserving the Samoan culture and language and helping to identify digital solutions to preserving and enhancing their work so they can reach a wider audience is a realistic goal for FBPL. Samoan language and culture consultants enjoy a good relationship with the Territorial Librarian and often seek input when pursuing a literary or oral language project, and FBPL is a primary site for introducing their work to the community when they are ready.

Objective/Target #3: Promote and support computer literacy for the enhancement of job skills, and to help bridge the digital divide, by offering computer training in both central and remote locations.

Progress towards this goal:
☑ Surpassed the Goal

☐ Met this goal

☐ Made progress towards this goal

☐ Did not work toward this goal

The narrative for this section is covered under Goal#1 on page 2.

Objective/Target #4: Develop a service plan to provide training and access to a variety of assistive devices, equipment, and computer technology for the physically impaired and disabled, and offer a wide range of materials for vision and hearing impaired members of the community, to include large print reading materials, audio books, and closed caption viewing materials.

Progress towards this goal:
☐ Surpassed the Goal

☐ Met this goal

☑ Made progress towards this goal

☐ Did not work toward this goal

Instead of developing a service plan for assistive devices, a parallel project was developed to provide service to handicapped patrons to visit the library. After the experience of working with the special needs community, it seems prudent to obtain as much input and research as can be provided from other government and educational agencies before developing a full-blown service plan. This is a long-term goal for the library.

Paratransit bus service to the library was provided for two years in collaboration with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, but after evaluating the costs and usage, the program was reluctantly retired. Those patrons who used the bus service were very grateful, and thanked the library profusely for the limited time bus service was available.

A listening station for in-house review of the FBPL audio collection has been established, and there is now a circulating collection of audio books. The audio collection has been developed for use by persons with low-vision or no-vision, but is also available to people with good vision. After consulting with a advocate for the blind, who is blind himself and works with government

entities in both American Samoa and Hawaii, the decision was made to increase the audio books collection instead of pursuing the 'talking books' which require medical certification so that patrons can purchase or be provided with the ancillary equipment needed. Audio books provide practically the same service, and can be used by all patrons who require or prefer an audio option for their book needs. FBPL has also developed the collection of large print materials, which is exceedingly popular not just among the elderly but anyone who prefers the larger font.

GOAL 3: Establish the American Samoa Library Assn. (ASLA) to advance resource sharing through online technology and encourage professional development amongst library staff in the territory

Objective/Target #1:
Establish the American Samoa Library Assn. to include all territorial libraries, information agencies, archival and preservation institutions, and other like entities dedicated to developing and maintaining networked technology and resource sharing in the territory of American Samoa.

Progress towards goal:
☐ Surpassed the Goal

☐ Met this goal

☑ Made progress towards this goal

☐ Did not work toward this goal

The American Samoa Library Cooperative (ASLC) has been established and currently consists of the Feleti Barstow Public Library (FBPL), the American Samoa Community College (ASCC), the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office (ASHPO), and the Kanana Fou Theological Seminary (KFTS). A subscription online resource database was established by FBPL and ASCC, and is provided free to all members. Resources include: The Student Resources Center Gold; Lit Finder; Testing and Education Reference Center; Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center; Professional Collection; General Reference Center Gold; Student Resource Center Health Module; and the Health and Wellness Resource Center.

All member site circulation departments have been fully automated, and staff have been trained as needed for all upgrades and service additions. Due to their limited line-item budgets, all member sites prize the database access because they would not have such resources available without their ASLC membership. The KFTS has built a new library which is fully automated and staff members are actively involved in building their collection and increasing their online services for their patrons.

The existing ASLC members have proven to be the most enthusiastic and consistent participants in library training and innovative resource sharing in American Samoa. Regular meetings are held with all member sites to ensure everyone receives needed upgrades for any network

changes, and members are free to call and visit the Territorial Librarian or any other site if assistance is needed. Exchanging information happens frequently in formal and informal meetings, and this ongoing project continues to showcase the best online resource sharing in American Samoa.

Objective/Target #2:

Seek collaborations to promote and encourage Continuing Education (CE) for librarians and support staff through resource sharing between libraries, visiting instructors, video teleconferencing, distance learning opportunities and other means which are deemed appropriate for local needs.

Progress towards goal:

☐ Surpassed the Goal

☐ Met this goal

☑ Made progress towards this goal

☐ Did not work toward this goal

Professional development training has included ongoing computer services training for the Systems Administrator who teaches all Computer Classes for FBPL; working with professional consultants to train FBPL staff on how to improve customer service so that online reference material can be found more quickly; workshops on digital preservation; and improving customer service. FBPL staff have provided training sessions to the American Samoa Community College (ASCC) staff and the American Samoa Department of Education (ASDOE) library personnel on cataloging, digital resource retrieval, customer service, circulation automation and collection preservation. Surveys completed at the end of each session indicate a high level of satisfaction as well as a desire for further training.

FBPL has served as an internship location for the Marshall Islands Library Association (MILA) for members engaged in the University of South Pacific (USP) Library Certificate program. Interns spent two months in American Samoa for on the job training needed to fulfill their certificate requirements, and one of the interns trained in American Samoa is now in upper level management in the Marshall Islands Alele Inc. library system.

Professional training remains a critical investment, especially with computer and digital services, and consultants are usually brought on island for group meetings as needed, and the training is offered to library personnel territory wide. If individuals are trained off island, then they come back and share their knowledge at subsequent workshops. Surveys always indicate a high level of satisfaction for training workshops, in all areas, and generally elicit requests for similar areas or more advanced training, especially for computer and digital resource education.

III. Results of In-Depth Evaluations

An annual average of 50% of LSTA funding goes to outreach and literacy programs including the FBPL Computer Lab classes, the Summer Reading Program, daily reading and storytelling programs, and the on-site Reach for the STARS and Every Child Ready to Read Programs. Due to the booming growth of daycare centers in American Samoa, outreach services and collaborative partnering with Early Childhood Education (ECE) Centers and local daycare centers have proven to be a major initiative for library services in American Samoa. So many child care centers have opened during the last decade that the local government will soon be instituting a 5-star rating system to 'grade' the facilities and the available care offered. Daycare centers are actively seeking counseling on how to strengthen their educational components so they can become more then "just babysitters".

Working in conjunction with the "Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library" initiative from the Public Library Association (PLA), training workshops are held in American Samoa to introduce the concept of 'emergent literacy' by FBPL staff. Staff members give instruction and tools and support parents and primary care-givers for their roles as 'first teachers.'

Following the workshops, FBPL staff began their visits to the ECE and daycare centers, to present programs and discuss early literacy strategies with parents, educators and caregivers. After just a few weeks it was clear that a schedule would have to be developed that would allow for more visits to a child care center because the response was so enthusiastic. During their visits, FBPL staff provided dynamic reading and storytelling sessions, arts and crafts programs, and staff counseling to help centers develop their own reading programs and reading tie-ins. With the new schedule, individual child care center visits were increased from twice a week to three times a week, before moving on to the next center. There are over 60 villages on the main island of Tutuila, American Samoa, that are served by a total of 49 government approved day care centers, and 28 ECE centers. Since the inception of the "Every Child Ready to Read @ Your Library initiative, FBPL staff have worked at least once with every ECE center and a majority of the daycare centers.

Feedback from parents in addition to repeat enrollment in the pre-pre-school classes (0-3 years old) indicate a high level of satisfaction. Parents and caregivers are involved in the classes and learn new ways to interact creatively with their children. ECE teachers and daycare providers are also requesting repeat visits, and with the increased 3-times a week visits the result is FBPL staff have been able to develop real relationships with the children and the center's administration and staff. Participating daycare centers and new daycare centers now ask consistently for FBPL staff to come to their site and train their staff members on how to create successful reading and literacy development programs.

Over 3,400 parents, teachers and caregivers have been reached since the program's inception in late 2005 and though it is too early to measure any changes in children's learning capacity, staff expect to be making comparisons among siblings in the next few years to see if the change in

environment has helped children to exceed reading abilities of their older siblings. Overall, participants report a new or increased confidence that they are helping their children to build a strong educational foundation.

IV. Progress in Showing Results of Library Initiatives or Services

It is easy to measure outputs and activities, but measuring outcomes has been an ongoing challenge. Anecdotal information is the most time consuming measurement tool, but has proven to be the most truthful in terms of what people really want and expect from library services in American Samoa. General library usage surveys have been conducted and received a good response in the time allotted, and people showed a high satisfaction for library services and personnel and the facilities. Generally, patrons request more of everything: more books, more programs for children, more available computers and chairs in the library; and those requests have not changed since the library opened.

Since computers and children's programs remain the biggest requests, the majority of LSTA funding goes to those areas. Monitoring these programs is done through weekly meetings with Program Heads, but interaction and feedback is transmitted daily to the Territorial Librarian, by the Program Heads or organizational partners, so that any problems that may arise can be dealt with swiftly, or any program improvements can be implemented immediately to ensure constant effectiveness of all library programs. Self-reflection is constant, and is the reason the library is such a vibrant educational partner in the community.

V. Lessons Learned

There have been several collaborations with other agencies and organizations during the last five years and the value or partnerships has been underscored by the following groups:

American Samoa Library Cooperative - Creating an online information network in American Samoa has been a tremendous challenge, but the good news is that the network of partners who have stayed dedicated to the vision and allocated whatever resources they could to the project have seen a vast improvement in their facilities and services to the community and their patrons. The Feleti Barstow Public Library (FBPL), the American Samoa Community College (ASCC), the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office (ASHPO), and the Kanana Fou Theological Seminary (KFTS) carry the most current collections and online resources in the territory and the members' willingness to continue training their staffs has proven to be the main force in providing the best information and library services in American Samoa.

Territorial Administration on Aging Office (TAOA) – As described earlier in this report, the donation of computers to the TAOA office for the establishment of a permanent computer class has been one of the best success stories in delivering services to a truly underserved community. Senior citizens are now using computers daily at the center, and their self-esteem rises considerably just by learning to set-up and use an e-mail account. Due to TAOA's very limited

resources, once they had the computers and free Internet service for life courtesy of a local private vendor, they are now taking full advantage to bridge the digital divide by teaching their senior citizens the value of knowing how to use a computer and the Internet, and how they can enhance their lives with their new skills. The seniors' response has been overwhelmingly positive.

VI. Brief Description of Evaluation Process

Evaluation included the following elements:

- interviews and input from the American Samoa Library Cooperative members including the Feleti Barstow Public Library (FBPL), the American Samoa Community College (ASCC), the American Samoa Historic Preservation Office, and the Kanana Fou Theological Seminary (KFTS);
- a general library usage survey conducted at the State Library/FBPL over a one month period;
- interviews with the Territorial Librarian;
- review of all projects funded with LSTA monies;
- interviews with State Library/FBPL Programs heads;
- review of State Library/FBPL Board of Director minutes;
- environmental scan of computer technology and services available on island;
- interviews with stakeholders and collaborative partners;
- Monthly and Annual Reports from State Library/FBPL Program heads; and
- feedback from visiting consultants and professional trainers.

Evaluation costs include $1,000 for consultant services and all other evaluation costs are met in-kind from State Library/FBPL staff.