

An Evaluation of Activities Taken
Library Services and Technology Act
Alaska State Plan 2003 – 2007

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Part I: Introduction

The following report is an evaluation of grants administered by the Alaska State Library and an analysis of how these grants have furthered the goals stated in *The Library Services and Technology Act Alaska State Plan 2003 - 2007*. The purpose of the *Alaska State Plan* is to provide guidelines for the Alaska State Library and the Alaskan library community for the expenditure of Federal funds.

This five-year evaluation is required of each state library agency that receives Federal funding under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), as administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (20 U.S.C. Sec. 9134 c). It should be noted that only the grants awarded during the State of Alaska's FY2004, FY2005, and FY2006 (in which Federal Program Year funds for 2003, 2004, and 2005 were spent) were evaluated in this report as directed by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) staff.

The *Alaska State Plan* identifies five state goals that are consistent with LSTA legislation. The identified goals are:

- **Connectivity - Access to telecommunications:** Ensure that all Alaskan residents have affordable access to the telecommunications infrastructure for the delivery of information.
- **Information - Access to worldwide sources of information, educational resources, research data, etc.:** Ensure that all Alaskan residents have access to the wealth of cultural, and scientific information available in print, recorded, electronic text, multimedia and emerging formats.
- **Partnerships - Develop regional and multi-jurisdictional service strategies:** Explore the potential role of community partnerships and networks in the delivery of information services and encourage innovative and multidisciplinary/multi-jurisdictional approaches to meet the informational and educational needs of Alaskan residents.
- **Service - Improve library services to the underserved:** Improve library services to Alaskan residents living in underserved urban and rural communities.
- **Accessibility - Services to Alaskans with special needs:** Improve the delivery of library services to Alaskans with special needs

The Alaska State Library awarded 85 grants totaling \$2,229,230 during the three years of activity under consideration in this report. Grant amounts varied from \$184,473 to \$300. Public libraries received 31 grants, school libraries received 5 grants, academic libraries received 11 grants, special libraries received 3 grants, and library associations managed 35 grants. The scope of activities funded during these three years is as broad and varied as Alaska itself.

The impact of LSTA funds on library services in Alaska cannot truly be overstated. In an era of constantly declining budgets within state government, these Federal funds have allowed the State Library to fund many statewide, cooperative projects for which no other funding source is available. For example, LSTA funds made possible the formation of the Alaska Library Network, Alaska's first statewide library cooperative.

These funds help the State Library level the playing field for the poorest, smallest, and most remote libraries in the United State by giving them access to the same training opportunities as staff from urban libraries. One example of such an activity is the newly formed continuing education grant program, which annually reimburses one staff member from every public library outlet for the cost of attending continuing education.

Federal funds give the State Library and Alaska's libraries the flexibility to try innovative projects or new technologies such as the Live Homework Help, an online tutoring service and the new Listen Alaska Project, which provides downloadable audiobooks to library patrons from an easy-to-use website.

Funds from IMLS also help libraries with traditional library services such as purchasing integrated library systems for their library holdings. These grants help libraries by providing project funds for capital improvements that might, otherwise, be completely out of reach for many libraries.

It is clear from the evaluation that progress in the delivery of library services in Alaska was made on all five goals, albeit somewhat unevenly. Based on assessment completed by all the evaluators, the State Library and the Alaskan library community made progress toward Goals 1, 2, 3, and 5, while the evidence indicates that the aims of Goal 4 were substantially met. However, service to underserved Alaskans can always be improved, so Goal 4 will undoubtedly remain on the Alaska library agenda.

Following the introduction in Part I, the following sections, Part II and III, present a detailed analysis of LSTA-funded grant projects and programs, by activity area, within the five major goals of the current 2003-2007 plan. Every LSTA-funded grant in this evaluation period was reviewed and rated by a grant evaluator using a standardized grant evaluation worksheet (Appendix B). Evaluator assessments of individual grants or grant programs are reported, when significant, within the following narrative sections of this report. Individual grant rating scores are contained in Appendix D. Part II of this report includes a restatement of each goal and priority, background on the goal, an analysis, and recommendations made by grant evaluators on how the State Library could improve grants awarded under each goal. Part III provides an in-depth analysis of continuing education and training grants awarded during this three year period. Part IV discusses steps taken by the State Library to improve the evaluations presented by subgrantees. Part V provides the findings and lessons learned that the State Library can take to improve its entire grant program. Part VI provides a description of the methodology used to create this evaluation report. Four appendices appear in Part VII.

Part II: Overall Progress Made on *Library Services and Technology Act Alaska State Plan 2003 - 2007*

Goal 1: Connectivity - Access to Telecommunications

Ensure that all Alaskan residents have affordable access to the telecommunications infrastructure for the delivery of information.

Priorities

- Identify and develop opportunities for libraries to participate in cost-effective telecommunications networks.
- Develop programs which assist libraries in the following areas:
 - planning and identifying hardware and software needs;
 - identifying and evaluating affordable access services;
 - training library staff and parent agency personnel.

Background

Alaska, more than any other state, is playing catch-up when it comes to meeting national standards of affordable access to the telecommunication infrastructure. Because the great advances in connectivity nationally and globally are due largely to the deployment of fiber and wireless spectrum, both of which have limited application in Alaska, it is doubtful that all Alaska residents will have access to this affordable telecommunication infrastructure, as it is understood elsewhere in the country, for many years to come. While progress has been made since the current State plan was written in 2002, for example, all of Alaska's public and school libraries today have access to the Internet, much remains to be done. The Alaska State Library believes it has a leadership role to play in advocating for affordable telecommunications for rural Alaskans.

Alaska's public libraries made great strides in creating an adequate public access computing environment in the last five years, primarily due to the infusion of grant funds from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. However, due to the rapid changes in technology and the public's rising expectations that libraries will continue to provide public access computing services, this investment in hardware and software must be continued into the future.

Introduction to Goal 1

Three grants totaling \$226,301 were awarded to the University of Alaska to fund a joint telecommunications coordinator position, the Telecom Coordinator, shared equally with the Alaska State Library. While these three grants are formally listed under Activity 1.3 below, this Telecom Coordinator is also responsible for much of the progress made on Activities 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.8, and 1.9.

The State Library decided to allocate the majority of its funding under Goal 1 to this multi-year position. The Telecom Coordinator focuses almost all of his time on Goal 1 issues. The Coordinator's first year (August 2002 - June 2003) consisted largely of identifying, making contact with, and establishing relationships with individuals and organizations active in telecommunications policy at the state and national levels. The second year (July 2003-June 2004) saw the continued expansion of these contacts and relationships, while the incumbent became more knowledgeable about specific subject matters (e.g., broadband deployment to rural areas, E-Rate, statewide networks, etc.) as these issues relate to telecommunication policy and infrastructure development in the state of Alaska and the nation. The third year of this position (July 2004 – June 2005), was spent applying this expertise by assisting state, local, and federal efforts in telecommunications development for improved services to libraries and educational institutions across Alaska. In the fourth year (August 2005-June 2006), the Coordinator took an increasingly active role in promoting school and library connectivity to Internet2, the advanced network of the higher education community. These efforts culminated in his appointment as Executive Director of the Alaska Distance Education Consortium in July 2006.

The Telecom Coordinator's job accomplishments were highly rated. This "crow's nest" position is devoted to monitoring, analyzing, and influencing a highly complex, technical, and ever-changing arena that has important consequences for libraries today and in the future. The rater noted that residents in Alaska have benefited from the high level of expertise, applied knowledge, and focused effort that the Telecom Coordinator brought to a number of projects of statewide importance that are described below. By sharing this position between the University of Alaska and the Alaska State Library, costs are kept low, duplication of effort is eliminated, and the benefits are enhanced, since coordination of activities is built into the job description.

Assessment of Goal Activities

Activity 1.1 Explore current and alternative communications links to remote areas of Alaska.

Two grants totaling \$2,043 were awarded to the Alaska Library Association to research and analyze the possibility of using kiosks to provide library services in remote areas of the state.

Many of Alaska's rural communities are so small they do not have the local resources to operate a public library. Thus, there has been considerable interest over the years in the feasibility of a "library-in-a-box" that might be delivered as a self-contained unit to a rural village and maintained and updated remotely. The Kiosk Planning Grant was given to conduct basic research on what other libraries are doing with kiosks in terms of substitutes for branch libraries and whether a kiosk might be a suitable point for delivering library services in rural communities. To date, there are been few tangible

outcomes from this project beyond the basic research (to see the specific grant rating scores for this and all subsequent grants, please see Appendix D).

During this evaluation period, a variety of other non-grant funded activities made an impact on this objective. There is a long history of exploring current and alternative communications links to remote areas of Alaska. The Alaska Distance Education Consortium (ADEC), for which the Telecom Coordinator now serves as Executive Director, conducted a pilot project from 2001-2003 on the use of StarBand dishes for connectivity to rural communities, including public libraries. Since then, the Telecom Coordinator and the State E-rate Coordinator have worked together to document current communication links to remote areas of Alaska and to encourage new and better connections to rural areas.

By far the greatest change over the last ten years has been phenomenal success of E-Rate in connecting Alaska schools and, to a lesser extent, libraries. Over \$120 million has flowed to Alaska in the past decade. This dedicated funding has made all the difference in getting schools connected and keeping them connected at speeds that can now support interactive video conferencing in most school districts.

The State Library has used its operating funds to pay for the State E-Rate Coordinator during this evaluation period. This Coordinator provides assistance in all phases of E-Rate management to library and school district applicants. During the past two years, the Coordinator has taken responsibility for the application process for the very smallest of Alaska's libraries.

During the funding years 2002 through 2006 (July 1, 2002 through June 30, 2007) of the Universal Service Fund E-Rate program, 43 Alaskan libraries were awarded \$688,325, of which all but \$5,400 was used to fund telecommunications and Internet access costs. The remaining \$5,400 was used for purchase of equipment. To get a true picture of the impact of E-rate on Alaska, simply add the small number of individual public libraries that currently receive E-Rate to 33 combined school/public libraries and 317 school libraries who receive these subsidies through their school districts. The additional funding allocated by E-Rate has allowed upgraded phone, fax, and data line service and more advanced Internet access throughout the libraries of the state. All libraries have phone and fax service and most now offer Internet access to patrons and staff. Internet is offered through wired land-line, wireless, cable and satellite provisions.

Activity 1.2

Encourage telecommunications providers to expand low-cost, high-speed access to additional communities in rural Alaska.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

This is a nearly-overwhelming activity statement, especially for a state library that has no authority over telecommunications providers serving the largest state with the least developed infrastructure in America. The scope of the problem in Alaska is enormous. The majority of Alaska's 670,000 residents who live in urban areas (nearly 300,000 in

Anchorage; 88,000 in Fairbanks; and 30,000 in Juneau and a dozen smaller communities with populations above 5,000) have affordable access to telecommunications that is roughly comparable to that in the lower 48. There remains a substantial minority within the state, perhaps as many as 70,000 people, who do not have affordable access to Internet services. These are residents living in small, rural villages of less than 1,000 inhabitants, usually indigenous peoples, where the economies are depressed, unemployment is high, and the business case for Internet services is poor. Many of these villages are subsistence communities, where cash is scarce. There are also formidable natural obstacles to achieving this goal. Alaska lacks an extensive road system. It has no statewide electrical grid. When it comes to building a statewide telecommunication network, Alaska's wealth of wilderness, its national and state parks, its mountains and glaciers, its extreme weather conditions, all work against an "affordable" infrastructure.

Five years ago, over 150 of these rural communities had no local dial-up Internet service. That number is now down to fewer than a dozen communities, thanks to the deployment of village satellite installations by multiple commercial Internet service providers and an innovative grant program by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska. Many of these satellite services support "broadband" under the Federal Communications Commission's threshold definition (512 kbps in one direction), but cannot support the increasingly robust broadband (in the 10s of Mbps) available in the largest Alaskan cities and throughout the continental U.S. While there is increasing use of submarine cable and microwave to deliver true broadband to isolated areas of the state, there is usually no business case to be made for broadband where communities are below 1,000 persons. Statewide, more than 10% of the population is served by satellite alone, which means costs are ten times greater for the same amount of bandwidth (e.g., \$3,000 vs. \$300 monthly for a T1 line).

In an effort to address this problem, the Telecom Coordinator worked with the University of Alaska and nonprofit communities of interest to create the Alaska Telecommunications Users Consortium (ATUC). During its short existence (2000-2004), ATUC intended to provide its membership of nonprofit entities with a collaborative procurement process of aggregating demand for essential products and services including technology selection, network topology, network design, network management, and telecommunications and bandwidth services. Unfortunately, ATUC's public funding was challenged by several telecommunications carriers as "competing with the private sector," and, as a consequence, its funding was canceled.

Though ATUC no longer exists, it was a learning experience in the politics of aggregating demand for more affordable telecommunication services among nonprofit communities, particularly in rural areas. The knowledge gained is being put to use in building the ADEC (Alaska Distance Education Consortium) Ak20 Network, a high-speed network open to schools and libraries through Internet2. At this time, the organization is working hard not to threaten local telecommunication companies and to partner with local Internet service providers in building what is essentially a transit network for Internet2 for nonprofits such as schools, libraries, and health centers.

At this point in time, the Ak20 Network and ADEC may be the best hope for drawing attention to the growing digital divide between rural and urban Alaska. Senator Stevens and his staff are very much aware of the problem and have introduced several pieces of legislation which could help ameliorate it. The larger issue is the overall reform of the Universal Service Fund, particularly as pressure grows to include broadband as a service eligible for USF support.

In light of the complex nature of telecommunications politics in Alaska, the State Library's decision to use grant funds for a Telecom Coordinator to survey and map this territory can be well understood. In terms of Activity 1.2, the lack of any grant projects that address this deficit can also be understood.

Activity 1.3
Participate in Federal Communications Commission, Regulatory Commission of Alaska, and other entities' processes which affect communications access for libraries.

Since this activity most closely describes what the Telecom Coordinator does on a daily basis, the three grants that fund his position were listed under Activity 1.3. No other LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

Activity 1.4
Collaborate with statewide groups and consortiums to build and expand access to Alaska's online library catalogs and electronic resources.

Six grants totaling \$159,419 were awarded to six public libraries located across Alaska. All the grants helped libraries with various upgrades to their online catalogs.

The State Library funds a number of grants each year to support the acquisition of new or next-generation online library automation systems and the conversion of and migration of records to new systems. While these projects were not seen as innovative by the grant evaluator, they, nonetheless, represent major capital items that most libraries or consortiums cannot typically fund through regular operating budgets. These projects help to create access to local or regional resources and have a significant impact on documenting statewide library holdings, especially since the majority of these projects now feed their library holdings into ALNCat, the Alaska Library Network's subset of OCLC holdings in Alaskan libraries.

The Telecom Coordinator negotiated and administered the OCLC Group Services Agreement (GSA), a three year statewide contract valued at over \$500,000 annually, discussed in Activity 2.3. The individual grant projects funded under this activity made progress on the local level, while the actions of the Telecom Coordinator made progress on this activity at the statewide level. He also serves on the statewide Databases for Alaskans Committee.

Activity 1.5
Assist libraries in at least three communities annually to
acquire hardware and software to connect to
SLED (Statewide Library Electronic Doorway) and the Internet.

One LSTA-funded grant totaling \$4,000 was awarded to a public library to purchase new public access computers.

The State Library far exceeded this goal through a large infusion of targeted grant funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, starting in early 2003. In the intervening four and a half years, the State Library has expended or distributed 1.2 million dollars in direct or matching grant funds to re-alter the public computing landscape in Alaskan libraries. Every public library in Alaska received either a state-of-the-art public computer in 2003 through the original U.S. Library Program or new public computing hardware and software in 2006 through the Staying Connected Program. Early Gates program funds also allowed a handful of public libraries, not yet connected to the Internet, to connect for the very first time.

The original program provided the first public access computer for approximately a fourth of Alaska's libraries. The Staying Connected Program has also made an enormous difference for many public libraries even though it was a relatively modest amount of grant money, \$1,300. Some libraries reported they were able to buy a second public access computer, reducing patron wait time as much as 50%. Others replaced very old computers, including one library that replaced a ten-year old PC. Yet others said buying a new operating system made their public PCs run much more smoothly and efficiently, reducing staff maintenance time. A number of librarians reported it made them look more technologically competent when they had new hardware and software. This grant program reaffirms the observation that small inputs can sometimes have large program impacts in the life of librarians and their patrons.

The State Library has funded library technology equipment and support service in the past and will continue to in the future when Gates Foundation grant funds run out. These grants have tremendous impact on towns, which receive them because libraries are frequently the only publicly available access point to the Internet for the community.

Activity 1.6
Provide training to libraries in identifying, assessing, and evaluating
automation/electronic access needs.

No LSTA-funded grants were given in this activity area.

Despite the lack of grants in this activity, the State Library presented or sponsored a great deal of technology-related training, primarily with Gates Foundation grant program funds, during the evaluation period. Over 90 training sessions, ranging from multi-day workshops and conferences to two hour hands-on computer lab training sessions, have been offered to a cumulative audience of almost 900 participants. Topics covered have been broad, ranging from classes teaching library staff to use the

Databases for Alaskans more effectively to workshops on installing a wireless network. However, no classes in the specific topic described in this activity - identifying, assessing, and evaluating automation/electronic access needs - have been delivered, due to a lack of in-house expertise in the subject.

Alaskan librarians have become much more savvy providers and users of technologies in the last five years but this need remains, albeit in a different context than originally projected. Mechanisms, training or otherwise, should be designed and implemented to assist libraries, especially small libraries, with identifying, assessing, and evaluating technology requirements in the next five-year plan.

Traditionally, some of the best training in cutting-edge developments in library technology is provided at the annual meetings of the Alaska Library Association (AkLA), when speakers of national repute are brought to Alaska. Unfortunately, despite continuing education and travel grant support, not everyone comes to these annual meetings. Providing adequate training opportunities for rural libraries, especially where staff turnover is a recurring problem, remains a challenge for the State Library. Distance-delivered training options must be explored in the future.

Activity 1.7
Support and encourage school libraries to
integrate technology into school curricula.

One grant for \$4,000 was awarded to a school library to purchase student-use computers for the library.

This activity area was specifically created to document LSTA funding in schools. Although only one modest grant was funded in this area to purchase computers for a school library in rural Alaska during this evaluation period, the State Library will continue to provide grant monies to school libraries that submit competitive grant applications.

Activity 1.8
Monitor information collection by other entities regarding
telecommunications connectivity in Alaska.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under Activity 1.8.

The Telecom Coordinator has been very active in this area, collecting everything current on Alaska telecommunications that is publicly available. He has worked closely with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska(RCA) on its broadband inventory. Both the E-Rate and Telecom Coordinators have met with numerous congressional and federal staff during their visits to Alaska or in Washington, D.C., to confer on Alaskan telecommunications issues.

Activity 1.9

Work with libraries to establish and expand network connections.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

During this evaluation period, the Telecom Coordinator worked with existing organizations and helped to create new ones (e.g., Ak20 Network) that will expand access to electronic resources in Alaska. The Telecom Coordinator compiled comparative research on state library networks and was involved in the planning process for formalizing the Alaska library network.

Assessment of Goal 1 Progress and Recommendations

- Surpassed this goal
- Met this goal
- Made progress towards this goal
- Did not work toward this goal

Neither the Alaska State Library, nor even the State of Alaska, can by itself meet Goal 1. The State is heavily dependent on the Universal Service Fund and other federal monies to keep basic telecommunication costs affordable and available. For that reason, we can only claim to have “made progress towards this goal” over the last five years, and we hope to be able to make the same claim at the end of the next five years, since “affordable access” is a relative goal that is measured against the progress the rest of the nation is making. Unfortunately, though federal subsidies narrow the digital divide between Alaska and the rest of the nation, there is an even more serious digital divide within the State itself. The next state plan should continue to address this moving target of ensuring that all Alaskans have affordable access to the telecommunications infrastructure for the delivery of information.

The fact that the Alaska State Library cannot achieve Goal 1 by itself is no reason to abandon the goal. The State Library has taken a rational, methodical approach to the problem of telecommunication in Alaska. Through its past commitments, the State Library has developed valuable in-house expertise and leadership in the areas of telecommunications and Internet connectivity. Now it needs to build upon these strengths by publicly championing the goal of an affordable telecommunication infrastructure for all Alaskans, while partnering with other state agencies, the legislature, and the Governor’s office, and working with other interested parties, including private foundations and industry. Planning of this nature can only be done cooperatively, otherwise implementation is largely ineffectual. The State Library should work to revive and, if necessary, coordinate and lead strategic planning efforts for telecommunication services at the statewide level.

In its broadest sense, this goal should be retained. However, in its more specific expression, i.e., “Ensure that all Alaskan residents have affordable access to the telecommunications infrastructure for the delivery of information,” it should be rewritten to reflect the changes and developments that have taken place in Alaskan telecommunications over the past five years. Some attention should also be paid to

defining “affordable” in the context of personal income and to defining adequate information infrastructure in terms of the digital divide within Alaska and between Alaska and the lower 48.

The current priorities should also be re-examined. The first priority of identifying and developing telecommunication networking opportunities is being actively pursued by the E-Rate Coordinator through improved school networks; by the Telecom Coordinator through the Alaska Distance Education Consortium’s Ak20 Network; and by the Alaska Library Network Coordinator, through her development of that organization. Nevertheless, there needs to be more active outreach to and coordination with other organizations and communities of users with similar telecommunication service needs, particularly those representing rural Alaska, where needs are still going unmet.

The second existing priority could be clarified: is the goal to empower local libraries to define their own information technology equipment, services and training needs, or to create statewide programs in those areas which can directly assist libraries in performing those tasks? For example, to what extent does this priority advocate for programs which assist libraries in planning and identifying their own individual hardware and software needs, and to what extent is it advocating that programs be developed at the statewide level, perhaps through the auspices of the Alaska Library Network, to meet the aggregated hardware and software needs of all libraries or classes of libraries? The next state plan should clarify these issues.

An additional priority should be considered which would give the entire subject of planning for and implementation of an affordable statewide telecommunication infrastructure higher visibility and importance by making it an explicit and fundamental goal activity.

Goal 2: Information - Access to Worldwide Sources of Information, Educational Resources, Research Data, etc.

Ensure that all Alaskan residents have access to the wealth of information available in print, recorded, electronic, multimedia, and emerging formats.

Priorities

- Support regional and statewide cooperative collection development activities and networks.
- Coordinate statewide resource sharing activities and improve linkages with systems outside Alaska.
- Promote and support the creation of Alaska-related digital resources.

Background

In 2002, when the current State plan was formulated, there was still a marked divide between access to electronic resources among Alaska libraries and their users. Building on a history of cooperative collection development and resource sharing in print materials beginning in the 1970s, similar efforts to make electronic resources available statewide began in the 1990s with the creation of the State Library Electronic Doorway (SLED), a portal to Alaska online materials, and the creation of Databases for Alaskans, a statewide collection of licensed databases available at libraries of all types and at home for Alaskans, who had personal internet access. In reality, actual access was spotty during this time because areas outside of the major population centers still had unreliable or no access to the Internet.

This is a broad goal, focused on developing collections of electronic resources and services, to serve an ever-widening proportion of Alaskans. Formats that were unavailable when the 2003-2007 plan was created, such as books in MP3 format and live chat reference or homework help services, emerged and were embraced on the Alaska scene in the course of implementation of this goal. Regional and statewide collection development activities included the continuation of SLED and the Databases for Alaskans. Progress in coordinating statewide resource sharing activities and in improving linkages with systems outside Alaska came through continuation of existing statewide services and the implementation of new ones, such as the statewide contract with OCLC. Creation of digital resources included several projects that allowed resources to be transmitted digitally in new ways.

Assessment of Goal Activities

Activity 2.1

Continue coordination of the Collection Development Committee of the SLED (Statewide Library Electronic Doorway) Advisory Board, in identifying Web sites and other resources that meet the information needs of Alaskans.

Two grants totaling \$30,728 were awarded to the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) library under Activity 2.1.

Since the early 1990s, SLED [<http://sled.alaska.edu>], has served as a directory of Alaska and ready-reference web sites selected by a committee of librarians to provide “stable, unbiased, accurate, and complete” information to Alaskans through their library or home computers. Later, SLED became the doorway to the Alaska Virtual Library (a.k.a. Databases for Alaskans or the statewide databases or, as most recently dubbed, the Digital Pipeline). In addition, SLED provided links to all web-accessible Alaska library catalogs and served as the access point to two passworded licenses to the OCLC WorldCat interface. During 2003-2007, SLED also became the entry point to the Alaska Digital Archives, a pilot virtual reference project (Activity 4.2), ALNCat, and Live Homework Help, an online homework help service (Activity 2.5). State grant funds and UAF operating funds also support the maintenance of this important web site and support of the volunteer committee of librarians that oversees SLED.

Because this activity supports a long-term project, the reporting for this grant has become a bit pro forma. Statistics on use of SLED are supposed to be available online, but little analysis has been provided in grant reports. In FY2005, over 700,000 hits from users all over the world were recorded but because of limitations of the recording software, this does not represent total usage of the site. Despite the limitations of data collection, use increased 50% over the previous year. The site is commonly linked on all types of library and government web sites in Alaska. SLED has become a brand-name for not only the site, but many of the services including the statewide databases, to which it leads.

The rater’s average rating of the benefits and statewide impact of the support of SLED probably reflects more on the rather perfunctory grant reports than the total impact of the site on users. As SLED develops and ages, it is time to look for means of collecting more purposeful information about who uses SLED and how it is used.

Activity 2.2

Provide consultation and training to libraries in assessing and evaluating unique local collections for inclusion in OCLC and other informational databases and services.

Two grants totaling \$15,127 were awarded to a public library and to AkLA to help these entities meet the goals of this activity. Of the two projects in this activity, one was to provide training and the other allowed actual cataloging of special resources.

For over four decades, Alaska librarians, like librarians worldwide, have worked to make local special collections known and available to users everywhere. This effort is echoed in other projects in this report, such as those connected with the Alaska Digital Archives, SLED, and, notably, the statewide contract with OCLC, which produced a statewide online catalog of Alaska member library holdings. All of these efforts move the state one step closer to providing true statewide access to the holdings of all sorts of institutions within the state.

The Map Cataloging workshop, driven by a revitalized Cataloging Roundtable of the Alaska Library Association, brought an expert map cataloger to the state to train professional and paraprofessional catalogers from all types of libraries, including those with major map collections. One librarian reported that she had been a cataloger for fifteen years and had never had any training in map cataloging. Over half of the participants reported that they were able to competently catalog map materials for the first time and they anticipated the volume of map cataloging would increase.

The Cordova project had less clear outcomes, but was still rated highly. The Cordova Community Library cataloged almost 1,500 items from small special libraries: the offices of the Native Village of Eyak, the Cordova Historical Society and Museum, the Prince William Sound Discovery Room, and the Prince William Sound Science Center. Although problems were encountered in the course of the project, the results are records for the resources of the smaller libraries, which now are accessible through the Cordova Public Library catalog.

If the activity of the Cataloging Roundtable of the Alaska Library Association continues, the depth of cataloging expertise available in-state will undoubtedly increase. A new goal might be to work to make this increased expertise available for training, consultation, or actual cataloging services to smaller libraries like the ones in Cordova, where lack of local expertise slowed the process of cataloging some very specialized collections.

Activity 2.3 Fund access to 800 number service for Reference and Interlibrary Loan.

Nine grants totaling \$220,193 were awarded to three public libraries and one special and one academic library each under Activity 2.3

Alaska is still considered a resource-poor state in terms of total book and periodical collections. The materials that are available are heavily concentrated in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau, where the seven largest library collections are located. Furthermore, professional expertise is heavily concentrated in the three largest cities, where over 75% of librarians with masters-level training are found.

Backup Reference and the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) 800 number for small public and school libraries in outlying areas continued to be offered in 2003-2007 in an effort to address this imbalance. More accessible electronic format periodicals, ability to email reference questions, the impact of the Internet, and diminished presence of professional

librarians in rural school districts have all changed the use of the service in this evaluation period. Some of the medium-sized libraries, once heavy users of the ILL service, can now handle their own electronic interlibrary loan requests because of their membership in the OCLC General Service contract. However, the smallest libraries, where staff lacks basic reference training and that have not joined the OCLC statewide contract still need and continue to utilize this service. As the evaluator of this project commented, the costs of this project rose significantly as the number of libraries using it declined. During 2004, the cost of a transaction was \$20, not out of line with other estimates for ILL transaction costs, but, like other long-term projects, the 800# ILL and Reference Service should be scheduled for regular re-evaluation. As the evaluator indicated, continued improvement in technology, even in rural Alaska, may make other ways of delivering this service more cost-effectively emerge. Careful evaluation will be necessary because the smallest libraries continue to be managed by staff with limited formal training. Until this changes, it will be difficult for a single-staff or an all volunteer library to perform independently all the functions that larger libraries offer without this sort of assistance. The evaluator also pointed out that not all of the targeted libraries use this service. This bears further investigation. Do these potential users know the service exists? The high turnover in rural community and school libraries suggests that some libraries may have lost contact with this lifeline.

The Alaska Project, which ceased operation in 2005 after 22 years, was originally instituted as a centralized service that paid invoices for borrowing, photocopying, and postage costs for out-of-state ILL requests made by users of participating Alaskan libraries. This centralized service relieved Alaskan libraries of a once time-consuming and costly activity by processing invoices that ranged from as little as \$1.00 to over \$20.00 per transaction. The State Library felt the project had served its purpose over the years. While it helped an ever-smaller group of libraries avoid the personnel costs associated with paying interlibrary loan invoices, the benefits of the Alaska Project became increasingly narrow in terms of statewide impact. New developments in the areas of resource sharing, such as the OCLC statewide contract have changed the lending landscape, making it far more simple for libraries to handle the accounting and payment of ILL costs themselves.

As one project in this activity area continued and another ended, the OCLC Group Services Agreement (GSA) emerged as the most important new grant in this group. Precipitated in part, by the demise of the OCLC/WLN CD-ROM utility, LaserCat, which was heavily used by smaller libraries, and also by the desire of larger libraries to contain the complex costs associated with OCLC membership, the agreement aggregated annual costs of existing OCLC members with a subsidy from LSTA funds, which allowed smaller libraries to join as members at a minimal cost (a \$250 introductory fee). All Alaska member holdings are now represented in ALNCat, an online subset of OCLC's WorldCat database. ALNCat is available through SLED not only to member libraries but all Alaskans who have access to a web browser and an internet connection. Only member libraries can access and download catalog records and use online ILL services.

The Alaska State Library paid for training to introduce the medium-sized and smaller libraries to these new services, protocols, and interfaces. A statewide advisory group,

with cooperation from OCLC staff, produced promotional materials for ALNCat, the Alaska Library Network Catalog. The total of Alaska OCLC member libraries has increased from 70 to 90 and 50,000 unique Alaska holdings are now available to Alaskans and those outside of Alaska. Although OCLC has offered training in Alaska in a variety of formats and several venues, it has not been able to offer appropriate training for first-time users from small libraries. The difficulty of using the cataloging and ILL services for novices who do not use the OCLC utilities on a daily basis proved to be a serious problem in implementation. Another unanticipated difficulty was the amount of time the State Library has had to spend negotiating billing problems and other details of the contract with OCLC.

In the first two years of the agreement, a total of 78, 029 searches on ALNCat were documented from member libraries and through SLED, although only 43 member libraries were listed in the statistical report. Most searches originated from the largest libraries, and thirteen of the listed libraries originated searches less than ten times in the almost two-year period. On the other hand, almost 21% of these searches originated from SLED. Before the contract expires, it would be interesting to discover why over half the member libraries are not providing a direct link to ALNCat from their own library home page. In order to maximize the benefits of the OCLC group contract, the State Library should analyze why current members are not using all of the cataloging and ILL services available to them.

The other two projects in this area provided expensive scanning equipment to make special holdings available to a larger audience. The Petersburg local paper is now accessible back to its first issue in 1914. The Health Sciences Information Services at the University of Alaska Anchorage is now able to offer access to the state's premier medical collection through the purchase of a planetary, overhead color scanner that provides information for health care providers and libraries in PDF format. Although evaluation of the outcomes of these two projects was limited, the Petersburg project reported that in a three-month period, they were able to fill 100% of patron requests for newspaper articles. The Health Sciences project would have had an impact on the delivery of health information, but the grant report was filed before any results were available, due to difficulties in installing the scanner. In this geographically remote state, where delivery of equipment may be very slow and indeed take a major portion of the grant period, the Alaska State Library may want to look to a follow-up reporting mechanism to provide increased accountability, both on the part of the grantee and the granter.

Activity 2.4

Identify and negotiate with database license holders to allow regional and statewide public access to resources through SLED.

Under Activity 2.4, one grant for \$36,000 was coordinated by the State Library to pay the initiation fee and maintenance costs for a partnership composed of twelve libraries that developed a shared contract for downloadable audiobooks. These materials are currently accessible only to cardholders of member libraries in the pilot project.

The Listen Alaska project consists of negotiation for a joint subscription among twelve libraries serving the majority of Alaska residents to provide registered library users with downloadable books in MP3 format. Because the project was implemented at the end of the fiscal year, there are not sufficient reports of outcomes or outputs to evaluate it properly. The vendor makes statistics of use readily available, so a follow-up evaluation should be initiated. This group approach to sharing the cost of a foray into a new format makes sense, but the actual operation of the collaborative subscription as well as the use of this popular service deserves further study and documentation.

Other licensed services were identified, negotiated and added to SLED during this period. They are described in Activity 2.5.

Activity 2.5

Develop and manage statewide use/licensing agreements for full-text journals and other informational databases and services.

Five grants totaling \$91,666 were awarded to one public and one academic library under Activity 2.5.

These grants represent an ongoing project that supports the statewide databases for all Alaskans with Internet connections. The Databases for Alaskans are primarily funded through state funds, but LSTA funding has allowed the database offerings to expand beyond the core offerings funded by relatively static state funding.

Billed as an “information dividend” for all Alaskans, the Virtual Library had in the past focused heavily on journal, newspaper, and health resource articles. In this period, one new offering was Live Homework Help, an interactive live-chat homework help service for grades 4 through early college conducted by trained tutors who are available online from 1-9 PM seven days per week. A new educational and practice test site was added, as was an automobile repair database that includes recall information, repair instructions, and readable wiring diagrams for a wide variety and vintages of vehicles. Use of all services has been positive and amazingly instantaneous considering little publicity was offered initially for any of the three. The Live Homework Help was eventually promoted to Alaska schools by the press officer of the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development and the vendor has offered bookmarks, business cards, and posters to promote the service. The vendors all provide documentation of use. The Live Homework Help service includes a routine survey of its users including ratings and comments. The ratings are uniformly high and the effusive student comments bring chuckles to the statewide database committee and the Library Development staff each month.

Although consistent and high use can be documented, one wonders if enough potential users know of these resources. At the Alaska State Library’s request, the Live Homework Help vendor includes a zip code survey with each Alaska session and a post-session evaluative survey. The distribution of zip codes show use of the service is not evenly distributed by population. One factor may be the fact that the service was not available to Macintosh users in a state where there is higher-than-average use of Apple products. The vendor has announced that a Mac-friendly interface is under development.

All three of the products adopted by the Statewide Databases committee using Federal funds are relatively easy to use. However, the ubiquitous nature of Google presents a high hurdle in getting patrons to try other online resources, especially, those resources that entail some degree of learning and skill to use effectively. In an effort to counteract this situation, State Library staff spends considerable effort promoting the databases and offering training to librarians, teachers, and state employees.

Activity 2.6
Provide consultation and assistance to libraries in
accessing and evaluating electronic resources.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

A number of other projects discussed in the evaluation contributed to this activity. Some of the training carried out under Goal 4, much of which was funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, also supported this activity.

Activity 2.7
Provide training opportunities designed to promote effective use of
electronic tools for reference, bibliographic access, and research.

One grant for \$4,620 was awarded to a combined academic/public library under Activity 2.7.

An Alaska State Library consultant has observed that it is relatively easy to provide electronic content, but harder to provide promotion and training for resources that promise statewide access. This is due partly to the peculiarities of advertising anything in this state, where billboards don't exist, trainers cannot drive to 80% of the communities, and mass media is more likely to come from far-away signals captured in satellite dishes rather than from locally-originated programming.

Many new online services were made available during this period. All of them needed to be promoted to potential users and most required some training in order for users to use them fully. Some new resources such as the Automotive Repair Reference Center provided interfaces that are relatively intuitive, but the full power of most of the new electronic resources, whether it be the bibliographic tools of the contracted OCLC services or the licensed databases for magazine and newspaper articles, require some training for effective use.

Most training opportunities under this activity were directed toward library personnel on the theory they would be the logical trainers on the local level. Live and online training of the OCLC cataloging interfaces, training for librarians and library aides at school library boot camps, public library workshops, site visits, conference presentations, school district in-service training, and university classes all were offered in this period and were funded through federal grants described elsewhere, as well as with Gates funds and local school district support.

The one grant listed under this activity was inspired by the observation of library staff at the Tuzzy Consortium Library in Barrow. They noticed their youngest library patrons used library computers primarily for chat, email, and games but seemed oblivious to the larger information landscape available to them online. In their project, the Tuzzy staff created and distributed a daily information scavenger hunt question to children. They aimed to introduce the children to informative Web sites via SLED by providing questions on topical and culturally appropriate topics. The questions were shared with other libraries in the North Slope Borough plus a few libraries elsewhere in Alaska. Young people found the answers by using various SLED resources. Questions appeared online six days per week for 50 weeks. Unfortunately, gathering statistics of use outside of the Tuzzy Library (where 4,142 total answers, an average of 13 per day, were documented) and tracking of outcomes for the overall project did not occur.

Recently funded with Gates Foundation funds, a project to create online mini-tutorials for the licensed databases available statewide on SLED is still in progress and out of the scope of this evaluation, but training for and promotion of the range of electronic resources is an area that continues to need more consideration in the future.

Activity 2.8 **Support the creation of the Alaska Digital Library.**

One grant for \$46,750 was managed by the Alaska Library Association for a project executed jointly by a school district and public library.

The LearnAlaska project did not create archival content for the Alaska Digital Archives, but used that content to create teaching materials for students of Alaska history. The project was proposed and carried out by a partnership of the Museum of the North, the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District, and the Fairbanks Public Library. As the evaluator writes, "There were many positive outcomes of the project: building and facilitating use of the Alaska Digital Archives, providing a forum for librarians and teachers to collaborate on educational projects, developing teaching materials to assist in the teaching of Alaska Studies courses in high schools statewide, promoting awareness of online resources rich in primary source information related to Alaska and the technological tools to best use them."

The participating teachers and school librarians developed 23 Alaska history lessons collaboratively. The coordinator of the project participated in outcome-based evaluation training and carried out a pre- and post-survey to measure changes in behaviors and attitude. Although the group size was very small, she found that the group met or exceeded the targets set in terms of awareness and actual use of the Alaska Digital Archives, the LearnAlaska software, and other Alaska history resources. Because the topic is Alaska history, this resource will continue to be useful as Alaska high schools implement a new state-mandated Alaska studies graduation requirement for 2009. The project was one of the most highly rated in terms of innovation in Goal 2 activities.

Assessment of Goal 2 Progress and Recommendations

- ❑ Surpassed this goal
- ❑ Met this goal
- ✓ Made progress towards this goal
- ❑ Did not work toward this goal

Improvements in the infrastructure for digital dissemination of information combined with the effort represented by projects in this goal area make clear that progress toward the goal was made. Nevertheless, because there are still special resources, jewel collections, waiting for the expertise to create records that would allow Alaskans to access them, there is still much work to do in this goal area. There remain a vast number of holdings that could be digitized, but for lack of equipment, funds and staff, and because some of the online resources are not adequately publicized or, in some cases, require training for both library staffs and the general public to use.

A thornier problem shared by libraries nationwide is convincing the public, and some library staff, that licensed databases with sophisticated, but less-than-intuitive interfaces are valuable in a world that sees the clean and streamlined Google interface as the ideal access to all things informational. In the next few years, librarians in the state need to have a focused discussion about whether more and better training or concentrated effort to create metasearch tools to the statewide databases and other online resources should be the thrust of future activity in this area.

Also worthy of careful consideration is the question of document delivery. Are there creative ways to provide relatively speedy delivery of books and other physical items, or will digitization be the only way to make the growing wealth of resources available on a statewide basis in this geographically challenging state?

Finally, even when one looks at the apparently impressive adoption of databases: ALNCat, SLED, and the Alaska Digital Archives through the various spreadsheets provided in grant reports, there is not a very uniform means of documentation or a standard for the methods of data collection. The reviewers could track the rise and fall of uses of some of the services, but had little insight into what the changes meant. Are 78,000 searches of ALNCat in 23 months a “good” number? The raw data tells funders little about who is using the resource or what percentage of the potential statewide audience is being reached. It is also not clear what use is ultimately being made of the resources and whether or not users have been successful with their searches.

As noted earlier a number of the larger grants in this area are long-term ones, and over time the reporting has become perfunctory. In other projects in this area, the outputs or outcomes were not reportable because the whole year of the grant was devoted to planning, purchasing, creating, beta-testing, or waiting for large and expensive equipment to arrive from distant vendors. This problem could be addressed by institutionalizing a process of formal review for long-term projects and programs either through regular meetings with the program providers to assess usage or results, or an agreed-upon systematic evaluation process. Follow-up output/outcome reports in the

six months or year after the smaller grant-funded projects end should be conducted in cases where impacts cannot be reported by the federal deadline. There would be no need to file a new narrative final grant report, simply to provide documentation through surveys, use statistics, or other means appropriate to the project's scope.

Finally, it would be good to know how many librarians in the resource-limited areas of the state and how many citizens at large know that they can access what lies outside of their local physical collections at all. Few of the grant reports included accounts or samples of how the new or continuing service or resource was advertised or promoted to potential users.

Goal 3: Partnerships - Develop Regional and Multi-jurisdictional Service Strategies.

Continue to develop and explore the role of community partnerships and networks in the delivery of information services and encourage innovative and multi-jurisdictional approaches to meet the informational and educational needs of Alaskan residents.

Priorities

- Encourage libraries and other agencies to extend and enhance local library services through the development of regional and multi-type service networks.
- Provide consultation, training, and technical assistance to libraries in the development, improvement, and operation of cooperative activities and networks.

Background

Alaska's large and remote geographic region, combined with rising costs, funding shortfalls, and increased demand for services, provide great incentives to look to partnerships as a method for improving the quality of library services statewide. In this climate, there is more pressure than ever for libraries to form partnerships with each other and other public agencies to offer both more cost-effective and new and enhanced services.

Historically, a variety of partnerships have had far reaching effects in our state. From the early development of the first ALNCat on microfiche and the Alaska Project to the recent introduction of OCLC statewide group services contract and formalization of the Alaska Library Network, Alaska has always prided itself, despite its scant material resources, on its collaborative and cooperative library culture, that has made possible collectively what would have been impossible singly. Our formal and informal peer networks, such as the Resource and Research Library Directors, Public Library Director's Leadership Group (DirLead) and professional organizations such as the Alaska Library Association and (AkLA) and the Alaska School Library Association (AkASL) are vibrant groups that meet regularly and often collaborate with the State Library on projects of mutual benefit.

Assessment of Goal Activities

Activity 3.1

Monitor network development around the state and continue work toward cooperative arrangements with regional, university, state, and municipal network providers.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

Despite the lack of grants under Activity 3.1, the Research and Resource Library Directors Group, the academic and public library directors of Alaska's largest three communities and the State Library, continued to meet twice each fiscal year to share information and plan major projects of regional and statewide impact. The Listen Alaska Project described in Activity 2.4 was an outcome of their work together.

The effort to move Alaska in the direction of a distributed statewide online catalog and circulation system, described in the current plan has not come to fruition, but there are other notable efforts in the area of cooperative resource sharing which are detailed in other sections of this report. Notably, a number of libraries in smaller Alaskan communities such Dillingham, the Mat-Su Borough and Craig have implemented joint online library systems and coordinated user policies and procedures to better serve their local and regional patrons.

Activity 3.2

Maintain an active role in local, regional, and state networking activities and keep abreast of the policies and activities of other network and information providers, such as universities and state and federal government agencies.

One 'grant' for \$30,780 was awarded to the State Library for the indirect costs of managing the LSTA funds received during FY2005. The State Library did not take an indirect fee during FY2004 and FY2006.

Indirect funds were used to partially fund the salary and benefits for an Administrative Manager II who provided oversight and management of fiscal tasks relating to LSTA grant expenditures in FY2005 only. This staff person worked closely with the Alaska State Library's Grants Administrator to assure that proper accounting procedures were followed, funds were disbursed in a timely manner, and all accounting records regarding grant funds were correct. Funds were handled in an efficient manner, providing program support for a wide variety of state networking activities.

Focused effort, as defined in this activity, has been fallow, except as noted in Goal 1, given the efforts of the Telecom Coordinator in monitoring developments in the field of telecommunications. The State Library generally monitors and responds to major developments within the library community but not at the level specified in the wording of this objective. Activity will increase with the tenure of the new Alaska Library Network (ALN) coordinator, whose job will be, not only to keep abreast of new partnership opportunities, but to actively pursue them if they support the mission and goals of the network.

Activity 3.3
Participate in and support the establishment of a statewide online library system which can offer a selection of technological services to member libraries.

Two grants totaling \$23,512 were managed by the Alaska Library Association to provide travel for a committee composed of librarians from all types of libraries to meet and plan for the creation and development of the Alaska Library Network, the first library cooperative to be developed in Alaska.

These two grants represent the most notable achievement under Goal 3. The ALN organizational meeting and the work of the Task Force in Phase II were foundational steps in formalizing the Alaska Library Network. While the concept of ALN has existed since the 1970s, the time came in late 2005 to finally decide whether or not a more structured formal network was needed to take Alaska to the next level of coordinated, cooperative library service. The two grants funded an organizational meeting and the work of an ad hoc Task Force established to create a concrete proposal for starting a formal, structured ALN.

During the organizational meeting, participants representing various types of libraries from all geographic areas of the state reviewed other state networks, discussed issues and services of importance to their libraries, took a “straw” vote strongly endorsing the formation of a formal ALN, and created a vision for the new network.

This vision provided the basis for the work of the ALN Task Force in Phase II. The Task Force conducted a statewide needs assessment to ascertain other common needs. They crafted a mission statement and logo, designed a preliminary structure for the organization, wrote a job description for a full-time Coordinator, and identified sources of initial funding. An ALN marketing strategy was also developed. Information generated by the Task Force was shared with the Alaska “library world” through regular postings on a statewide listserv, as well as on a new ALN website. The new position was advertised and an ALN Coordinator was hired at the end of 2006. She began work in January 2007.

Although program outcomes cannot be fully discerned yet, these grants were instrumental in the formalization of ALN. The network will allow the library community to enjoy the benefits of many more organized cooperative activities and services, funded through a variety of mechanisms, than in the past. Alaska’s decentralized and distributed approach to many statewide efforts has become increasingly ineffective over time due to reductions in staff coupled with the addition of statewide activities that need more concentrated management, evaluation and promotion. LSTA funds were allocated in FY2007 to fund the ALN Coordinator’s position and network activities.

The rater noted there was little congruence between work formalizing ALN, as funded by the two grants, and the current wording of this activity. It is strongly suggested that outcomes, indicators and targets, specific to the newly-formed Alaska Library Network, are developed and written for the new LSTA five-Year Plan.

Activity 3.4

Encourage the establishment of a statewide library card.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under Activity 3.4 during this evaluation period.

After several years of discussion, a group of Alaska's academic and public libraries initiated statewide direct borrowing privileges in 2000 for library patrons of participating libraries. In the intervening years, this Reciprocal Borrowing program has proved to be quite popular and, to date, 53 institutions participate in it. A group of librarians continue to work toward having a statewide card.

Assessment of Goal 3 Progress and Recommendations

- Surpassed this goal
- Met this goal
- Made progress towards this goal
- Did not work toward this goal

As explained in the introduction to this goal, the tradition of cooperative ventures between libraries and library groups and individuals remains strong and vibrant in our state, even if much of this work is largely undocumented in any formal way. The formalization of ALN will allow the library community to benefit from more cooperative projects because someone will be devoted solely to initiating and administering these efforts. Thus, the second priority under this goal (to provide consultation, training, and technical assistance to libraries in the development, improvement, and operation of cooperative activities and networks) may yet be realized in the future.

However, since the development of ALN was the only significant LSTA-funded grant in this goal area, although many other cooperative ventures are described in other parts of this plan, we can fairly say only progress was made in reaching the goal. In truth, there is potential to do much more in the area of partnerships. Tremendous opportunities exist to encourage libraries to engage in new partnerships and to provide training and assistance in the development of collaboration ventures. More than that, partnerships open the doors to innumerable opportunities for librarians.

There is a growing trend in libraries to create partnerships with non-library organizations with allied goals, in contrast with the assumption of the currently-written goal, which seems to imply partnerships exist primarily between libraries. Expanding the implementation of partnerships into the realm of encouraging individual libraries to reach out and form mutually beneficial relationships with organizations and agencies in their own community could greatly enhance the image of the library and extend a welcoming face to underserved, disadvantaged and other nontraditional patrons and groups. At a time when librarians feel they need to increase their advocacy and public relations activities, partnerships could help libraries reconfigure their services to meet new community needs. This would also help libraries be viewed as a more valuable asset on the local and national scene.

If partnerships are to remain as an important statewide goal in the next plan specific mechanisms need to be developed by which mutually beneficial partnerships can be identified, planned, implemented, and evaluated. It appears that having a written goal without any way to achieve it is not sufficient. Partnerships do not have to be big projects. The State Library could develop and promote a specific grant program encouraging the development of model partnerships either between libraries or between libraries and other institutions and agencies. Two categories of grants could be given:

- Planning grants to assist in the planning and development of a model project through a partnership
- Implementation grants to assist the grantee and the partner(s) implement the model project

These grants should include a matching requirement, so that both the library and the partner agencies provide resources to the project. These could be in-kind, but should be documented as part of the project. This component would help in identifying roles and responsibilities for each agency and create internal commitment to program outcomes.

Grantees should be required to share the materials they develop for their project. The Alaska Library Network could play a role in the dissemination of project materials, since some small libraries might not have the capability to advertise their projects. ALN could function as a clearinghouse and advocate for successful partnership and collaborative projects. By developing model project materials and making them easily accessible to other libraries, more libraries may be spurred to develop partnerships.

In order to increase funding for grants in this area, the State Library or ALN could reach out and explore the creation of partnerships with other funders in the state who may also wish to see increased sharing of resources to meet local and regional community needs. This initiative would take time to develop, but if successful, it could leverage more funds for library projects statewide.

Goal 4: Service - Improve Library Services to the Underserved.

Improve library services to Alaskan residents living in underserved urban and rural communities.

Priorities

- Provide alternative services for people who live in areas lacking sufficient population or local revenue to support independent library units.
- Support and fund training opportunities for librarians and staff.

Background

Alaska's immense geographic area and sparse population continue to make the delivery of public library services to underserved rural Alaska a challenge. Over 10% of Alaskans live in areas not served by a public library. To serve these people, the State Library continues to fund the Regional Mail Services program and is constantly on the lookout for new service delivery mechanism targeted to the needs of rural Alaskans.

Training is an enormous need in the state. Few continuing education opportunities exist for individuals working in Alaska's smallest public libraries. Most of these individuals have no library training and rely on inherited practice and self-taught skills. Staff in Alaska's larger libraries also have difficulty receiving regular, systematic, and timely training due the cost and difficulty of travel within the state and to the lower 48.

Assessment of Goal Activities

Activity 4.1

Provide funding to the two Regional Resource libraries (Fairbanks and Juneau) to provide mail service to families and individuals who live in areas that cannot support development of a public library.

Six grants totaling \$864,598 were awarded to two public libraries to provide library services to Alaskans living in areas that are not served by public libraries.

Regional Mail Services provides library materials, including books, media, articles, interlibrary loan requests, and reference services to Alaska residents living in communities where no public library is available within 50 miles. The two Regional Mail Services libraries (Fairbanks and Juneau) continue to receive LSTA funds to provide this program on behalf of the State Library. This is a premier, personalized service serving a group of very enthusiastic and appreciative users.

While this program has been ongoing for well over three decades, there has been little innovation in how these services are delivered. In the southeast region served by Juneau, gradually switching to request-only service, as opposed to a pre-selected automatic shipment, was introduced a number of years ago. The request-only model has

been shown, over time, to reduce costs and increase patron control over material selection, demonstrating that efficiencies and different delivery options can indeed be actualized, even in a long-standing operational model.

As noted in the 1998-2002 LSTA Five-Year Evaluation, this program continues to be very costly for the number of patrons it serves. Today, Regional Mail Services collectively provides service to 408 families, calculated as 800-1,000 individual users. Since 2000, patronage has declined by 22% making this service even more costly than originally reported, with an annual per family cost of between \$553 to \$778, depending on the service delivery model.

The program was well rated for meeting the needs of its target audience and for its excellent, tailored services and for the strong relationship that users have developed with these programs. Both programs were highly-rated for making a strong contribution to this goal by meeting the needs of underserved Alaskans. The two reviewers criticized the high cost of the program given the population served. One wrote, "While this can be said to be a service of great importance and worth for those who use these services, it is clear that a relatively low number of eligible residents make use of this service. It is also clear that the expenditure of over \$250,000 annually to address the needs of so few can be debated in light of shrinking budgets and greater needs."

As noted in other evaluations of long standing grant programs, the reporting for Regional Mail Services has become a bit pro forma, providing scant new information from year-to-year. One reviewer also critiqued the programs for not having annual goals, such as increasing the number of patrons by a certain amount or reducing program costs by a set amount.

This is undoubtedly a necessary service in Alaska. In reality, few Alaska communities not already served by a local library can hope to support one. There will continue to be residents who will rely on this program for their library and information needs in the future. There are still Alaskans living in utterly isolated places with periodic access to postal services.

It is imperative that the State Library devise ways to provide remote users with library services at a level that is more cost-comparable to that of communities with libraries. Looking forward, Regional Mail Service providers should also be anticipating demographic shifts in Alaska, such as the population shift from rural to urban areas and increases in the older population, as well as the service potential that improved telecommunications will have to outlying areas in the future. The State Library and Regional Services staff should develop a future-looking plan of service that incorporates these changes.

In line with the growing cost and the declining patron base of the Regional Mail Service Program, the State Library decided in late 2005 to cap the cost of the entire statewide program at \$200,000 annually for the next five fiscal years (FY2008 – FY2012) with a six-month transition period to allow the Juneau and Fairbanks program providers to reconfigure their current delivery modes. While is difficult to reduce such a long-

standing program, this action is clearly overdue and will allow the State Library to expend needed LSTA funds on the emerging and future needs of the various constituencies it serves and supports.

Activity 4.2
Evaluate Regional Services program and
explore alternate and innovative ways of providing library services to
remote areas with no libraries.

Two grants for \$22,075 were awarded to the Alaska Library Association and one school district under Activity 4.2. No evaluations of the Regional Services programs were undertaken using grant funds during this period.

The Virtual Reference Service and Learning on Wheels grants were both aimed at bringing library services to residents of Alaska who are without access to a library facility. The Virtual Reference Service made authoritative reference help available anywhere with an Internet connection. Learning on Wheels paid for fuel for a bookmobile to deliver library materials and programs to two unserved communities connected by unpaved logging roads on the Prince of Wales Island.

Virtual Reference Service was a two-year grant project during FY2003 – FY2004 funded with a total of \$50,711 in LSTA funds. The reference staff of seven geographically divided libraries shared “on” times via web chat lines. Many queries came in through the state’s SLED website and were Alaska-specific, but only 9% came from self-identified rural residents. In the second year of funding, only 732 questions were answered. Patron satisfaction was high, but with a cost-benefit ratio falling well below desired levels and a promised software upgrade failing to materialize, the decision was made not to fund virtual reference beyond this pilot project.

While the Virtual Reference Grant was innovative, the pilot project was judged more successful by academic librarians than by the public and special librarians in the participating libraries. There is no clear data to indicate whether or not the questions came from ‘underserved’ areas or from urban residents appreciating the convenience of online service. The service was used far less than anticipated for causes unknown, but likely insufficient marketing, software and technical difficulties, slow internet connections in rural areas, and patron unfamiliarity with the medium had impacts. This program was criticized for not being cost-effective.

The Learning on Wheels bookmobile service was seriously hampered by bad road conditions, poor weather, unskilled drivers, staff turnover at the grant management level and inconclusive data. Providing books and offering a summer reading program for children in two remote communities was intended to increase reading scores. There was no data collected to be able to determine whether or not the bookmobile services contributed to improved scores. Sixty-five people, mostly children, but about one third the total of the combined population of the two villages served by the bookmobile, took advantage of the service. No data was gathered about participation in the summer reading program or the number of books circulated. Only two communities were visited,

but it was impractical, even unsafe, to extend the service area of the project. One community eventually decided to start their own library. The school district neither applied for another grant to continue the service nor opted to sustain it with their funds. This project was also criticized for not being cost-effective.

Activity 4.3
Develop a model for strategic planning for use by
small and medium-sized libraries.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

The Library Development staff teaches and encourages the use of the Public Library Association's Planning for Results model, although the State Library does not mandate use of this particular model. The Head of Library Development also conducts approximately six to ten onsite planning sessions a year, customized to the needs of the library requesting assistance with a planning process. In the experience of the State Library, Alaskan libraries typically initiate more rigorous planning processes only when they are required to do so because of external events such as the need to raise funds for the construction of a new library building. The institutionalization of far more rigorous and continuous planning efforts, including systematic community needs assessment, program development and assessment, will become more essential in the coming years because at least seventeen public libraries are initiating major capital projects for library construction. Funders will require libraries to have robust long-range service plans that substantiate their current and future contribution to the communities they serve.

Activity 4.4
Encourage development of borough-wide library service.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

The State Library awarded grants during the previous five year plan that assisted libraries in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough in developing borough-wide library service. This activity results in more cost-effective library management and is still a potentially valuable objective in the Kenai Borough and the recently formed Denali Borough.

Activity 4.5
Provide consultation and support for libraries in developing
library programs which meet the needs of the local community.

Four grants totaling \$28,670 were awarded to AkLA and one public library to support reading incentive programs.

Reading incentive programs, as exemplified by the majority of grants awarded under this activity, cover travel costs for sending children's librarians as Alaska's representatives to annual planning meetings of the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP). Alaska's children's librarians help plan a cooperative summer reading program used in Alaska and nationwide. Participation in this program resulted in the

ability to distribute Summer Reading Project (SRP) materials through Alaska's schools and public libraries. Over 10,000 children participated in Cooperative Summer reading projects in 2004, far more than were able to take part before this comprehensive package containing materials even the smallest library could adapt to their needs, became available. In 2006, as reported in a pilot IMLS OBE survey, the SRP was successful in influencing the quantity of reading for most participating students and 35% of the respondents felt participation in the program improved the likelihood of their using the library for school information for the future.

Twenty themed pre-school Story Packets (in addition to 40 themed packets created with a grant prior to this reporting period) were created through a grant awarded to the Anchorage Municipal Libraries and made available to libraries, child care providers, and individuals statewide. Packets were advertised at conferences, workshops and through the media and the library association newsletters. Sixty-one packets circulated 1,100 times. This project has offered an enthusiastically received early literacy activity to rural and urban areas where few such programs exist.

While there is a tradition of summer reading programs and story times in libraries, the innovation in the foregoing program was in the collaboration and creation of materials that were cost-effectively produced, widely distributed and adapted to local situations. Packets complete with books, puppets, craft, music and activity suggestions made it possible to offer high-quality children's programs that would not otherwise be possible to create and present in a one-person library.

Activity 4.6 Provide training opportunities for library staff in the areas of basic skills, library management, and effective use of technology.

Training grants awarded under this activity will be discussed in Part III of the report.

**Activity 4.7
Work with small rural communities lacking library services to develop public information centers.**

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

This activity parallels, to some extent, Activity 1.1 under which the Library Kiosk grants were funded. There has been no other work or development in this area.

Assessment of Goal 4 Progress and Recommendations

- Surpassed this goal
- Met this goal
- Made progress towards this goal
- Did not work toward this goal

Goal 4 priorities were met, as evidenced by the data and comments shared in this section and in Part III, where the results of the in-depth evaluation of training grants are reported. Although there was no large scale break-through in services to the underserved in Alaska which would have merited the highest rating, the needs of Alaska's underserved were yet well addressed. Regional Mail Services is a critical service that will continue to serve Alaskans without a local library into the future, albeit in another fashion to fewer and fewer users. The State Library will continue to work with and supporting new public libraries that join the Public Library Assistance Grant Program. Any sound, innovative and economically-feasible projects extending library service to the underserved areas of the state will be funded and scrutinized for results in the future. The State Library will always support and fund programs, especially those that support children's literacy and meet local needs. Training initiatives are critical investments in the most important resource Alaskan libraries have: the people who work in them.

Some of the current activities in Goal 4, such as the development of borough-wide library service and the creation of public information centers, seem to lie largely outside the control, scope, and expertise of the State Library's current Library Development program. Accordingly, it is recommended that Goal 4, as it is currently conceptualized and written, should be analyzed to ascertain what is indeed feasible in extending services to the underserved in the next plan.

The definition of "underserved" should also be scrutinized to better define this audience in order to ascertain program goals and impacts with more precision. Are the underserved only those Alaskans without any library service? Should underserved Alaskans also include certain ethnic or age groups that have traditionally received less "targeted" library services? Are underserved Alaskans different from Alaskans with special needs, as defined in Goal 5, in any particular way? How does training impact the needs of the underserved? The next state plan should endeavor to examine and provide guidance on these questions.

Goal 5: Accessibility - Services to Alaskans with Special Needs.

Improve the delivery of library services to Alaskans with special needs.

Priorities

- Provide services and resources that allow libraries to expand and enhance their services to Alaskans with special needs.
- Assist libraries in their efforts to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Targeting library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills continues to be mirrored in demographic trends that are occurring in Alaska. Libraries have traditionally served as part of the safety net for people at the margins of society. Libraries are publicly supported and therefore should provide support for all members of the public, not just those in the majority.

Current state demographics and 2005 Census figures certainly indicate the needs outlined in Goal 5 are still valid. Alaska is diverse, with 5.4% (34,368) people born in other countries and 30.8% (197,650) who report their race as other than white or as mixed. A total of 8.9% (34,734 Alaskans of age 25 or more) do not have a high school diploma or GED. A total of 11.2% (71,409 Alaskans) live below the poverty level set by the Federal government. More than 86,000 Alaskans aged 5 years or more (14.8%) have either a sensory, physical, mental, or self-care disability. A total of 7.7% (49,413) Alaskans are under 5 years of age and 6.6% (42,354) Alaskans are more than 65 years of age. Just 4.2% (24,886) Alaskans report that they speak English less than “very well.” If Alaska has the same level of people with limited literacy as the U.S. as a whole (based on 1994-1995 International Adult Literacy Survey), then 46.6% (198,977) Alaskans aged 16 to 65 function at level 1 or 2 literacy. Level 3 or higher literacy is necessary for people to achieve success in today’s labor market, per the National Governor’s Association.

The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed in 1992. Libraries have had fifteen years in which to adjust their facilities, layout, and equipment to meet the needs of patrons who are covered by this landmark legislation. While LSTA funds cannot be used to renovate library buildings, these funds can be used to purchase assistive computer workstations. No grant applications were received during this evaluation period but this priority should still receive attention and be included in the new plan.

Assessment of Goal Activities

Activity 5.1

Assist libraries in identifying and communicating with target populations regarding their library service needs.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

With few exceptions, libraries in Alaska have never investigated the depth or breadth of library services desired by Alaskans with special needs. For most Alaskan libraries, the daily struggle for funding and managing other problems that threaten the actual survival of the library means that the needs of these groups are met on a person-by-person basis, rather than addressed as part of a larger service plan. Individual libraries may have surveyed their patrons to discover their needs; for example, the Alaska State Library Talking Book Center surveys its patrons every other year regarding their satisfaction with the library service they receive from the Center. The Anchorage Municipal Library is currently engaged in a public stakeholder analysis examining library service expectations in Alaska's most diverse community.

Activity 5.2

Improve access to materials in appropriate formats for Alaskans with special needs.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

Alaskans who are deaf are served by the Captioned Media Program located in Fairbanks, while Alaskans who are visually or physically handicapped to such a degree that they cannot read standard print are eligible for library services through the State Library's Talking Book Center in Anchorage. The Captioned Media Program and the Talking Book Center provide at least basic library service to two groups of Alaskans with special needs. Neither program relies on LSTA funding. Many public libraries stock large print books and audiobooks to meet local needs, though no survey has ever been conducted on the adequacy and use of these collections.

Activity 5.3

Provide information and training to library staff on the availability of adaptive products and partnership opportunities which allow disabled individuals access to library materials and electronic information.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity during this evaluation period.

Libraries did not submit any grant applications pertinent to this activity during this five-year period. As with the discussion of Activity 5.2 above, the assumption is that the two special libraries, discussed in Activity 5.2 are meeting the needs of patrons who are disabled, though no data has been gathered to verify this assumption.

Activity 5.4

Develop a research and demonstration project in a small community on the impact of school library services on reading scores.

No LSTA-funded grants were awarded under this activity.

In 1999, the Alaska State Library published *Information Empowered: The School Librarian as an Agent of Academic Achievement in Alaska Schools*, the results of a research project done during the 1997/1998 school year. While the Alaska Association of School Librarians (AkASL) continues to use the results shown in *Information Empowered* to advocate for funding, no additional grant-funded projects has been developed to measure the impact of school library services on reading scores. The State Library has funded a number of grants to help AkASL advocate for school librarians, but no additional research projects have been developed under this goal. As Alaska continues to experience a decline in the numbers of certified school librarians, the need for research under Activity 5.4 persists.

Activity 5.5

Provide resources to libraries to support GED programs, developmental reading and other literacy needs.

Four grants totaling \$66,361 were awarded to two public libraries and two school libraries during FY2004 through FY2006.

The four grants listed under Activity 5.5 provided resources to libraries to support “other literacy needs.” In each case, this need was to meet the reading needs of Alaskans for whom English is a second language (ESL). All four grants were awarded to libraries in Southcentral Alaska. In Anchorage, approximately 40,000 people (15% of the population) speak at least one of 100 languages other than English. In the Willow area, approximately 5% of the population are immigrants from Russia.

All the grants purchased “seed collections” of between 100 and 300 titles for each language. Languages covered included Russian, Spanish, Korean, Yup’ik, Tongan, Lao, Albanian, Tagalog, Samoan, and Hmong. Although the number of titles purchased for each of these seed collections was typically small, multiple titles were acquired to ensure availability. Presumably, as need and use of these collections is demonstrated, the “seed” will take root and the collections will grow and flourish. Every library that received one of these grants pledged to sustain the project by making additional purchases in these language collections by using operational funds designated for acquisitions.

The need for extended acquisitions time to identify materials in foreign languages, staff reductions, school district summer vacations, shipping problems, staff unfamiliarity with the targeted languages, extended processing time, and the need to purchase special foreign language cataloging records for these materials caused significant delays. Because of these delays, statistics were limited in the final reports. The exact extent of the use, particularly over time, is not clear.

Evaluators scored the grant projects at average to above average in all attribute areas. One grant reviewer had the following suggestion for improvement, “Perhaps a different kind of evaluation or reporting period could be considered, possibly extending to the reporting period to 18 months or two years for ESL grants? A follow-up report should be required after a second year of use.”

As for the other needs mentioned in Activity 5.5, the State Library did not receive any direct grant applications to support GED programs or developmental reading projects in libraries. While libraries did not submit any grant proposals to fund GED programs, two grant-funded statewide licenses under Activity 2.5 did provide a modicum of support to high school students. Live Homework Help provides tutoring assistance for students in grades four through college. Students can take practice GED tests on the Testing and Educational Resource Center, another online source purchased with a statewide license.

Libraries did not submit any grant applications for developmental reading projects, but the State Library’s Coordinator for Children’s and Youth Services did participate in Alaska’s Early to Read, Early to Lead Task Force meetings. The Alaska State Library, in collaboration with the Anchorage Municipal Library, is designing a program, which will begin in FY2008 to distribute early education developmental and reading materials for pre-school children to agencies across the state who serve this audience.

Assessment of Goal 4 Progress and Recommendations

- Surpassed this goal
- Met this goal
- Made progress towards this goal
- Did not work toward this goal

During 2002 – 2007, the State Library and its subgrantee libraries made progress toward the goal of improving the delivery of library services to Alaskans with special needs, as shown in the discussion of the goal activities above, but much remains to be done as explained in the section below.

The *Alaska State Plan 2003 -2007* did not clearly anticipate the need for collections of library materials in foreign languages as experienced by public and school libraries in Southcentral Alaska. It was fortunate that Activity 5.5 was written in such a broad manner that these four grants could be funded under this activity. The next plan should include an activity directly related to ESL grant projects. Since initiating successful ESL seed collections is a laborious and time-consuming process, the State Library should also encourage partnerships between libraries who serve similar ethnic groups, to collaborate on creating and sharing coordinated regional collections.

Based on the delays in ordering and processing foreign language materials experienced during these four grant projects, State Library staff should encourage libraries to engage in ESL grants over two years. One possible model for these types of grants would be for the library to buy seed collections during the first year of the grant. During the second year of the grant, the library could spend time developing promotional materials and

activities to inform and invite pertinent groups within their service areas to use these new library materials.

The major lesson learned in this area is that no assessment has been performed to properly identify the library needs of the populations who could be served under this goal. The grants submitted to the State Library were designed to meet a smattering of local needs and were sporadic, one-up grant projects. The lack of information about the needs of these Alaskans means it is difficult to design a thoughtful strategy that will assist libraries in meeting them. A comprehensive needs assessment conducted either on a statewide basis or in targeted communities would assist the State Library in evaluating individual grant applications received from local libraries, as well help to create a targeted grant program.

While the demographics listed above prove there are Alaskans with special needs, the decision to designate grant funds to meet those needs should be evaluated against the ongoing discrepancy between under-funded rural and better-funded urban libraries. It would be difficult, but perhaps not impossible, to do a needs assessment to help the State Library decide whether underserved rural Alaskans exist in greater numbers or experience greater library service needs than those Alaskans with special needs, as noted in the concluding discussion of Goal 4. Such a determination would help the State Library decide how to address these competing, yet complementary, goals with limited grant funds.

Part III: Results of In-Depth Evaluation

LSTA-funded training grants, as defined in the second priority for this goal, were a major program activity during the evaluation period. In total, 32 individual grants and one targeted grant program that awarded 45 continuing education grants to public library staff were funded during this evaluation period for a total of \$353,387. While all of these grants fell under Activity 4.6 of the current *Alaska State Plan*, the training grants form six more or less distinct categories, depending on the purpose of training. These categories are:

- Library basic skills training grants
- Leadership development grants
- Native librarians training
- Professional education support
- Specials topics training
- Conference travel grants
- Continuing Education Grant Program

Each category of grants will be discussed individually. Recommendations and lessons learned will be presented last.

Library Basic Skills Training

Five grants totaling \$90,971 were awarded to AkLA, AkASL, and two libraries to provide basic library training workshops.

Alaska invests heavily in basic library skills workshops for rural librarians who typically do not have any previous training in library administration and operations. All of these grants were given for library basic skills workshops that brought paraprofessional library staff from rural libraries together for an intensive knowledge and skill-building workshop, typically four-five days long, on operating a small public or school library in Alaska. Three of the workshops were presented in Anchorage, the other two in remote areas.

A Barrow workshop for combined school-public library staff in the North Slope Borough was offered the day before the start of the annual conference of the Alaska Library Association in 2005. Seven village technicians were thus able to take advantage of exposure to training and information-sharing with over 200 other library technicians and librarians.

The 2005 Small Library Institute for Management (SLIM) workshop brought together fifteen new library directors of very small libraries for basic training in all aspects of managing a small library and providing library services to their villages. The majority of the participants reported a significant gain in new knowledge overall and specifically as related to their library jobs, and a significant increase in their job confidence levels as a result of this training.

Fourteen technicians directing village libraries from the Prince of Wales Island and surrounding communities in southeast Alaska went to Ketchikan for a SLIM workshop in late 2005. This regional SLIM was offered in partnership with the Ketchikan Public Library and the University of Alaska Southeast-Ketchikan Campus library, in response to the development of a number of new libraries in this part of the state. The workshop organizers also intended to build stronger bonds and a closer cooperative relationship among this group of librarians. Post-training evaluations showed the participants scored relevance to their needs and satisfaction with the training at the highest level.

The School Library Boot Camps offered the first opportunity for 40 school library aides from all over Alaska to get specialized training in running a library. In most cases, these aides cannot rely on a local district media coordinator or a public librarian to assist them with their jobs. The need for this kind of training for rural school library aides has been evident for a long time. Participants reported in post-workshop evaluations a significant increase in confidence levels in all ten areas of instruction. All participants reported that they encountered new, useful, and practical information during these boot camps.

The basic skills training grants were extremely highly rated in all areas, except innovation, with slight variation in one grant project. The State Library's experience sponsoring this kind of training demonstrates, based on post-conference evaluations, that face-to-face, cohort-based training is an extremely effective, if expensive, developmental learning opportunity for staff working in Alaska's public libraries. A focus group conducted with SLIM alumni in May 2002 also confirmed this finding.

In addition to introducing a great deal of formal knowledge, these multi-day intensive institutes provide an excellent forum for problem-solving and strategizing about "real-life" issues that consume a great deal of time in each librarian's work day. Socially constructed learning is particularly important in developing best practices and innovative solutions to situations in which firm, pre-established protocols and methods are absent or tenuous. Upon completing the basic skills curriculum, most participants quickly realize there is rarely one right way of solving problems. This insight allows rural library staff to more confidently approach and solve operational and administrative issues. Most importantly, rural library workers develop peer networks which they use for support and assistance. Many participants also report they are less reluctant to call Library Development staff members for help after meeting them in person.

It is traditional for the State Library to offer or sponsor basic skills workshop as the number of new rural library directors reaches a critical mass, typically 15-20, to justify the considerable time and expense it takes to host a SLIM Institute. Although the State Library provides consulting and support services to new library directors, especially in rural settings, as an ongoing service, the time gap between basic skill workshops and the resulting skills gap is a concern.

Leadership development grants

Four grants totaling \$75,522 were awarded to AkLA for leadership development projects.

Since 1994, the State Library has funded annual leadership training, statewide cooperative planning, and peer networking for the 20 members of the DirLead group, public library directors serving communities with populations over 3,000. Before DirLead was formed, library professionals leading Alaska's largest libraries were largely isolated from one another and had little access to regular, high-quality, customized leadership development training and activities. Collectively, the directors of the libraries in these communities serve approximately 87% of Alaska's total population and, as such, have an enormous impact on the quality and delivery of public library service statewide.

In the three years covering this evaluation period, the DirLead group completed a three-year leadership development training program based on a training needs assessment conducted in late 2001. The plan outlined three broad learning objectives by year. The first year focused on how to think about the future in a "right frame of mind," to consider on the future of the public library as an institution and to create and articulate a vision for DirLead libraries. The second year focused on creating positive, lasting systemic change in libraries. The third focused on the "language of leadership" and how leaders communicate, persuade, influence, and create successful, collaborative relationships.

DirLead adopted outcome-based evaluation during the FY2006 grant cycle to evaluate the knowledge and applicability of each year's training workshop. In addition, at the end of the third year of the training plan, DirLead members were surveyed, as they are regularly, about the most important benefits of attending DirLead meetings. Four major themes were reported:

- The opportunity to meet, form personal relationships with other library directors and build a peer support network around the state
- The opportunity to receive high-quality leadership training, helping members improve their skill sets and become better at their jobs
- The opportunity to exchange ideas and information about library policy, practices and trends, giving members new and valuable perspectives on their work
- The opportunity for personal and professional rejuvenation

This grant program was well rated because DirLead has been very effective over the years in meeting the goals initially created for this group by the State Library. Not only does the DirLead grant allow this now very cohesive group of library directors to receive planned training over the number of years, which adds layers of collective leadership expertise, but it also creates an informal "training ground" and instant peer network for new library directors. The annual cycle of training also works well because it allows the DirLead members to absorb one large conceptual leadership development topic each year and time to integrate and apply it over the coming year. The grant reviewer noted that a whole new crop of DirLead members have taken on major leadership roles within

the Alaska Library Association over the past years. Another suggestion was that there should be a plan activity devoted to the development of library leaders.

A grant was funded in FY2005, which allowed seven library staff members to attend the Pacific Northwest Library Association's (PNLA) Inaugural Leadership Institute in 2004. The multi-regional nature of this developmental experience helped a group of Alaskan librarians broaden their horizons beyond Alaska. In a post- evaluation, many commented on the value of the Institute in helping them develop their own personal vision statement and goals. Three participants became active in their local library associations and two others report they have a more positive and outgoing mien in their contacts with people.

Native Librarian Training

Three grants totaling \$22,212 were awarded to AkLA to provide training opportunities to Native librarians.

Native Alaskans comprise at least 16% of the total population, yet few work in Alaskan libraries. The Alaska Native Issues Roundtable of AkLA is working to increase the number of Native Alaskans who enter the profession and to help them assume leadership roles within the library community. During the evaluation period, three grants were funded to provide training and conference travel for Native librarians. The purpose of two grants was to develop the skills of a cadre of four Native Alaskan librarians by sending them to the Third and Fourth International Indigenous Librarians Forum. The third grant paid for these same four librarians to attend the 2005 Alaska Library Association meeting in Barrow to present sessions on a variety of topics pertaining to Native Alaskan librarianship.

Many Native librarians come from isolated communities. The International Indigenous Librarians conferences are a unique source of information and support in creating library services tailored to this group. The last grant in this set suggests that these librarians are indeed taking on leadership roles within the state as experts in and advocates for their service population. These grants were rated at the highest level for meeting the needs of its target audience and for alignment with and contribution to the plan goal of improving library services to the underserved, specifically the Native community. The reviewer strongly suggested that grant programs assisting and supporting Native librarians and specifically library services targeted to the Native community be developed and included in the next plan. As with other multi-year grant initiatives, the reviewer suggested it would have been helpful to have a cumulative program review with a follow-up report built into the grant cycle.

Professional Education Support

Four grants totaling \$24,000 were awarded through AkLA to help students attend library school.

Alaska faces the retirement of many professionals in the next few years. The scholarship grant encourages and supports Alaskans interested in becoming professional librarians and committed to working in Alaska libraries, to complete their MLS or School Library Media Certification.

There is no library school in Alaska. It has been difficult to recruit library professionals willing to move to Alaska. Until graduate schools began delivery through distance programs, there were no options for residents short of leaving the state. This new option has made Alaska residents more interested in pursuing library studies, often while employed in Alaska libraries. In turn, this has increased the potential pool of professionals to fill jobs that were previously very difficult or impossible to fill.

The Alaska Library Association raises scholarship funds, but their contribution does not meet the needs of the number of outstanding applicants. Consequently, the State Library has used LSTA funds for the Professional Education Support grants for a number of years. Over the three year reporting period, grants were awarded to eight students, all library or school employees.

Even with the distance delivery option, graduate programs are stunningly expensive. While the amount of money given to the scholarship recipient is very small, \$3,000 toward the overall cost of the degree, it seems to provide a modicum of moral support and symbolic encouragement from the library community which is very appreciated by the recipients as noted in the grant narratives.

While this program is no longer considered innovative, the continuing need for professional librarians in Alaska is clearly demonstrated. A review of the grants showed that no post-grant documentation is maintained. One reviewer suggested keeping a simple "scorecard" of scholarship grants given over time, showing the current status of the scholarship recipient. Because the State Library has funded these scholarships for a number of years, use of such a scorecard would assist in reporting the impact of these scholarships over time, e.g., the number of professional librarians produced, the number of librarians who remained in state, etc.

Training in Special Topics

Seven grants totaling \$69,600 were awarded to AkLA and various libraries to provide training on a variety of special topics.

Grants falling under this activity area are all distinct projects developed to meet special and local needs. Five of these grants were used to offer workshops on a variety of topics. The Alexandria Training assisted a rural school district to automate its collections by bringing together thirteen school aides from surrounding villages for system training. The School Library Assistant Automation Training (SLAAT) workshop made information about library automation systems available to rural school and public library staff who otherwise have no opportunity to see products side-by-side and ask questions of vendors. The Southeast Story Hour workshop trained thirteen library staff

from all over the state in techniques for presenting children's story hours to encourage literacy.

The last of the workshops, *Building Library Marketing Communication Plans*, presented four one-day workshops on developing local marketing plans to 49 librarians in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Juneau. Interest in and the need for improved skills in the areas of public relations, promotions, and outreach has grown dramatically in Alaska in the last two years. This workshop both raised awareness of these increasingly important activities and taught the skills of marketing. In a post-workshop evaluation, a number of the participants reported they had taken action through a variety of mechanisms, in response to what they had learned.

The last three projects, while primarily training in nature, had other activities built into them. The Consumer Health Information Center project brought together seventeen library staff and health professionals from the Kenai region to evaluate print and online resources, to create a core print collection and a website, and to train participants in using the resources. There were two subsequent events for the public on consumer health information presented by participants of the workshop.

The Results Boot Camp trained one of our leading directors how to apply the new PLA Results process in her community. This director then implemented the PLA community visioning and planning process and shared her experience with other librarians at a subsequent AkLA conference.

The Dragonfly Project Phase II was a unique and innovative program that taught digital filmmaking to several target populations within the Haines community. Teens completed a documentary in which Native artists discussed their work and helped pass on their skills to future generations. The entire Haines community was able to celebrate the arts and the artistic achievements of the local Native groups at a public showing of the documentary. This exemplary project was cited for its innovation in meeting the needs of Haines and by challenging and extending the boundaries of traditional library services.

Evaluation scores varied, but overall scores in this category were typically above average for these specialized training sessions. Collectively, this category of training was rated lower for cost-effective use of funds. The high cost of face-to-face training in Alaska is a concern in all grant-funded training involving travel. But bringing librarians and library technicians together for training on topics of common need continues to be the training of choice in our state, undoubtedly because opportunities for face-to-face exchange are rare and consequently much valued. These sessions also contribute to building expertise in specialized knowledge areas that would be otherwise unavailable.

Conference Travel Grants

Eight grants totaling \$33,442 were awarded to AkLA and AkASL to help their members attend library conferences.

The Alaska State Library has historically invested LSTA grant money into funding conference travel for Alaska library staff. Great distances, lack of a road system, and the expense of travel create enormous barriers in delivering high-quality, regular training and continuing education opportunities in Alaska. Funding to bring librarians and library technicians together for conferences has increased access to training that is otherwise unaffordable for any but the largest libraries. As a result of the wide variety of competitive travel grants given in this evaluation period, 56 library staff members from public and school libraries have been able to take advantage of professional development otherwise out of their reach.

Many benefits arise from the conference travel grants, according to the narrative reports participants are required to file upon completion of travel. Knowledge in new and improved library administrative and operational techniques is gained and often applied to the job. Librarians, especially from small and isolated communities, have an unprecedented opportunity to learn from and interact with a variety of librarians from all sizes and types of libraries around the state. The conference travel grant that funded travel to the Public Library Association conference in Seattle in 2003 allowed Alaskan librarians to learn from professionals from varying sized libraries all over the country. From the diversity of the conference sessions to the immense vendor exhibits, conferences such as PLA give Alaskans a chance to understand not only “how the big guys do it” but to learn about creative solutions to problems they currently face. As noted from the narrative reports, the benefits of networking and the exposure to new ideas, creative solutions, and the collective sharing of “lessons learned” adds immeasurably to a librarian’s sense of commitment to providing another year of service in her community.

This set of grants was highly rated in all areas except innovation. While the evidence is anecdotal, it appears the benefits to the target audience mandate continuing to award these conference travel grants in the future. It is difficult to imagine another standardized library training venue that would impact the participants both cognitively and attitudinally to such a degree. In conclusion, the reviewers of the conference grants commented how laborious it was to read all the narrative reports from this grant program and to both generalize and somehow substantiate benefits and outcomes from them. One reviewer suggested creating a separate plan activity just for conference travel training grants and creating a set of unified outcomes, indicators, and targets for all grant awards that could be maintained and more easily-reported over the course of a number of years.

Continuing Education (CE) Grants Program

Forty-five continuing education grants totaling \$37,640 were awarded to individual public library staff to attend the training event or conference of their choice.

Beginning with FY 2006, the State Library instituted the Continuing Education (CE) Grants Program, partly to equalize the benefits of public libraries receiving regular continuing education opportunities without having to compete for one of the travel grants reviewed above and partly to assist public library directors, especially in smaller

communities, to meet their biennial continuing education requirement for the annual state Alaska Public Library Assistance grant. The CE grant program has a number of features:

- Grants are non-competitive and can be used for a broad range of pertinent continuing education opportunities, including: workshops or conferences held by AkLA, PNLA, ALA or PLA; distance education online classes; technical training events; or for travel and fees paid to a trainer to provide a workshop on site for public library staff.
- Grants pay for one training opportunity for one individual per public library outlet every fiscal year.
- Reimbursement is limited to up to \$1,000 in actual continuing education costs.

In the first year of its inception, the CE grant program funded 45 individual grants out of a total of 107 eligible library outlets. Thirty-three grants were awarded for travel to the 2006 Alaska Library Association annual conference in Anchorage; the remainder funded travel for training both within Alaska and outside, including those for the 2006 Public Library Association conference in Boston. For FY2007, a total of 34 continuing education grants have been approved or awarded.

Grant recipients are required to submit a form explaining the reason for travel before the grant is approved. Upon completion, grantees must respond to three questions on the final report: what was the content of the CE event; what learning resulted from the CE event; and what changes or improvements are planned as a result of attending the CE event.

A narrative analysis of the FY2006 CE reports reveals many of the same impacts noted in the discussion of conference travel grants. A cursory examination of reports reveals the following benefits:

- Receiving advice on pre-existing problems
- Spending time with others exchanging information and problem-solving
- Being introduced to new technologies and new products
- Receiving expert guidance from subject experts and presenters
- Learning how to implement successful programs
- Gaining insight into national trends
- Keeping up with the latest concepts in librarianship
- Being exposed to new ideas and given “permission” to do things outside the norm
- Forming stronger bonds with coworkers and colleagues around the state
- Putting a “face” to partner agencies, vendors and professional contacts

Also, over half of the grant recipients mentioned how much the training had impacted them in intangible ways, notably citing benefits such as:

- Renewed, refreshed perspective
- Rededication to providing the best library service possible

- Tremendous boost in confidence
- Invigorated by new ideas
- Inspired by the commitment of others

The new CE Grant Program was highly rated with the following caveats. First, the program was rated average for meeting its own goals and objectives and for innovation. It is unclear why barely half of the intended audience, eligible public library grant recipients, applied for this program. This year, the program appears to be faring no better in attracting more grantees. Also, grant recipients applied almost exclusively to attend the AkLA conference. While AkLA is a wonderful CE opportunity as amply illustrated above, it is but one of many allowable opportunities for learning as originally conceptualized by this grant program. To fully realize the intent of this new grant program, the State Library should analyze reasons why some are not taking full advantage this program's benefits. The possible remedies, such as increased program promotion or more targeted training opportunities, may be time-consuming to implement, so reasons for the lower than-anticipated participation rate need to be studied carefully.

Progress and Recommendations

It is highly likely the Alaska State Library will continue its commitment to funding training and continuing education initiatives in the coming five years with LSTA funds. Training is a perennial need in the library community as demonstrated through regular self-reports, surveys, and assessments conducted by the State Library and the high accolades and demands for more training events by participants. With very few exceptions, these grants were rated at the highest levels in almost all categories. Despite the occasional shortcomings of individual grants, the reviewers acknowledged these grants make possible what would otherwise be out of reach for most libraries and library staff – new knowledge, exposure to new ideas and perspectives, skills enhancement, opportunities for information sharing and problem-solving, and a sense of professional identity and community.

All the categories of training events reviewed above are worthy. All should be continued depending on the merits of the individual grant or the efficacy of the ongoing grant program. There are three concerns and corresponding recommendations related to this area. First, the currently worded activity statement, "Provide training opportunities for library staff in the areas of basic skills, library management, and effective use of technology" does not adequately capture the breath and depth of the activities conducted in the last five years. The new state plan must recognize and describe this unquestionably large area of effort with more precision. Training grants with targeted aims such as leadership development and basic library skills training must be clearly identified with corresponding outcomes and targets.

Secondly, while some of the training grants are to be lauded for their early adoption of outcome-based post-training evaluations, the usability and comparability of evaluation data in this area generally is problematic. Narrative reports of considerable length are

the evaluation method of choice. While narrative self-reports are rich sources of anecdotal and testimonial information, it is nearly impossible to generalize program results from them. For this reason, it is strongly suggested that unified training outcomes and measures be adopted under the format suggested in the preceding recommendation whenever feasible in the new plan. Narrative reports could still be continued primarily to help the grantee integrate what was learned, but those should be supplemented with appropriate types of qualitative data.

Finally, the Alaska State Library must seriously consider adopting distance-delivered training options in the future to address the very high cost of delivering face-to-face education in Alaska. It should also explore innovative ways of offering more targeted training on a more regular basis, especially to rural communities. In line with this activity, a new statewide needs assessment should be conducted in the future. Given the pace of change in libraries today, the results of the 2004 statewide survey are probably dated and of increasingly limited use.

Part IV: Progress in Showing Results

The Alaska State Library has made progress in implementing outcome-based evaluation (OBE) during the five years of the current State plan, but much more remains to be done. In 2002, when the plan was written, there was literally no awareness or understanding of OBE within the library community, much less among Library Development staff at the State Library.

Over the course of the last five years, the Library Development staff has learned enough about this methodology through the workshops taught by IMLS to develop their own OBE workshop, which was taught in August 2004 and 2005. No workshop was offered in August 2006 due to the extended leave of a key staff member during this period. Workshop participants were carefully selected from a pool of current grant recipients, whose LSTA grant projects were suitable candidates for OBE.

During the first-year workshop, the Library Development staff was generally disappointed by the evaluation data submitted by the FY2004 grant recipients. While most of them made a good faith effort in trying to apply the concepts of OBE, the data they submitted was generally not usable for OBE purposes in that it did not systematically evaluate the program's impacts in any meaningful way. OBE training delivered to eleven FY2005 grant recipients was, however, well worth the training because all but one submitted complete and credible outcome-based evaluations, which were reported to IMLS in the annual web-based *State Programs Report*.

For the first time since the State Library started trying to institutionalize OBE, Library Development staff is truly confident that a group of grantees is able to understand and apply this evaluation methodology. While some evaluations were more complete and better thought-out than others, all understood the basic principles and structure of OBE and applied these ideas in the required way. All measured program impacts in some quantifiable way. All had something interesting to communicate about the outcomes of the project. This training must be continued in order to diffuse this knowledge throughout the library community.

It is clear in retrospect that changing the 2005 OBE workshop to two days made a difference, since the grantees were able to design, present and complete an OBE plan for their projects prior to implementing their projects with the benefit of trainer and group advice and feedback. Once at home, grantees were able to execute their OBE plan as part of the project rather than as a hasty afterthought. Also, the Library Development staff is becoming much more comfortable with and conversant in OBE. We can now help our grantees design and execute OBE evaluations with full knowledge that we ourselves know how to do it. Our plan is to continue the OBE workshops in the future.

The more serious problem in trying to institutionalize OBE results in Alaska lies in the current State plan, which was never written or rewritten with an impact or outcome-based orientation in mind. There is, at present, no structure by which the Alaska State Library can report outcomes or impacts over time for large or multi-year grant programs. When credible project outcome-based evaluations are received, they are duly

reported in the *State Programs Report*. However, there are no mechanisms by which these and other types of data can be unified to report meaningful results for grant funded programs with similar ends, such as training.

This situation must be resolved in the next LSTA five-year plan, which should be written with certain outcomes, targets and data sources in mind for major ongoing programs and activities. The Library Development staff will undoubtedly have an easier time assisting grantees in designing project evaluations when a centralized data reporting structure is in place. For example, the lack of baseline data with regard to Alaskans with special needs has been noted and should be conducted to identify areas of greatest need within LSTA goal areas and to set appropriate targets for outcome indicators. In line with this activity, a much closer analysis of grant target audiences should be completed for long standing programs to isolate and identify program beneficiaries so that goals and the correct evaluation methodologies are created for these long-term programs. Training in OBE and other evaluation techniques should be offered on a regular basis to strengthen this capacity within the Alaskan library community. As librarians are increasingly forced to turn to alternative funding sources such as foundations for special projects, they will need grant-writing and program evaluation skills of a much higher order to compete successfully for these funds.

Part V: Findings and Lessons Learned

The cumulative ratings for all 85 LSTA-funded projects (see Appendix D) were above average in all attribute areas. In order, from the highest grant attribute score to the lowest, final scores for all grants are:

- The grant project met its own goals: 4.59 (out of a possible total of 5)
- Grant project made a significant contribution toward its corresponding state plan goal: 4.34
- Grant project had significant benefits for its target audience: 4.33
- Grant project had regional/statewide impact: 4.27
- Grant project used grant funds effectively: 4.26
- Grant project aligned with its corresponding state plan goal: 4.27
- Grant project was innovative: 3.73

Scores varied a great deal from project to project and by goal and activity area (see Appendix D for separate grant and goal rating scores). However, this group of grants fulfilled what most would consider the primary qualities of a successful project: meeting the specific goals of the grant project while making a contribution to a broader statewide goal and providing benefits to the intended recipients of the grant program. The low innovation score is not surprising. It confirms the Library Development staff's observation that few innovative grants are submitted each year.

A number of "lessons learned" were discussed in the recommendations for each goal of the current plan. Overall review also suggested the following deficiencies that appeared to be common to all goal activity areas.

Evaluation continues to be a weak link, in general, in the grants process. The structure of the current State plan does not help because it does not provide or suggest a uniform means of collecting usage data and key information for ongoing, long-term projects and initiatives. Some of the larger grants funded with federal funds are long-standing programs, and over time the reporting has become more than a bit perfunctory. In many instances, grant outputs and impacts were difficult to discern in final grant reports. In other projects, the outputs or outcomes were not reportable because the whole year of the grant was devoted to planning, purchasing, creating, beta-testing, or waiting for large and expensive equipment to arrive from distant vendors. It appears that the grant deadlines for filing reports on LSTA-funded projects and the current means of collecting evaluation data do not encourage or demand much reflective analysis on the grantee's part.

Accordingly, it is recommended that the State Library develop a periodic formal stocktaking process that focuses on collecting and reviewing program outputs and outcomes that represent a significant investment of federal and state funds. The Library Development team of the State Library should meet shortly after the grants reports have been submitted. They should read and discuss the reports, identify more information that may be needed for the upcoming federal report, and determine whether any special follow-up actions for specific grants are required. The State Library could work with

long-term project partners to identify feasible program outcomes, help them identify data sources and collection methods, and assist them in reporting results. This enhanced evaluation/accountability system will take a great deal of effort to set up initially, but it will more than likely reap benefits in the years to come by providing more insight into how project funds are or are not making a difference, and to what degree.

The review of the plan suggests there should be better integration between wording of the goals, the priorities and objectives, and the activities. Reviewers often commented that the activities did not always correspond well to the purpose of grants and visa versa. There seemed to be confusion where to classify some technology projects because Goal 1 and 2 both deal with technology, albeit, in different ways. The wording of some plan activities was so specific, it appeared to preclude similar projects with slightly different aims. Some might regard wording as a superficial criticism in the larger scheme of things but it does create confusion between what was originally intended by the plan and what is actually occurring over time. In other words, plans should evolve to mirror emerging needs, opportunities, threats, or be flexible enough to accommodate them under the allowable LSTA legislation. This situation could be remedied if the Governor's Advisory Council for Libraries regularly reviewed the state plan.

The State Library must advocate for or promote, in some way, goals that do not generate purposeful or innovative action on their own, for example, Goal 3 and 5 in the current plan. Once goals and objectives are written into the plan either for the duration of five years or shorter periods of time, methods should be devised for actualizing them rather than waiting for pertinent grant applications to appear in any given year. Targeted grant programs should also be designed to meet objectives, outcomes and targets, especially in new or "unconventional" areas, such as the development of community partnerships, and potential grantees should be identified, encouraged to apply, and supported throughout the process.

Part VI: Description of Evaluation Process

The Alaska State Library's Library Development staff completed the evaluation of the 2002-2007 State plan with a group of external grant reviewers and subject area experts, who both evaluated individual grant projects and assessed goal progress in specific content areas. Library Development undertook this process as a way of learning about the LSTA-grant program in much greater depth and breadth than the normal annual cycle of grant-giving and review normally allows or demands. The LSTA-funded grant programs and projects represent by far the largest area of discretionary spending on statewide library needs and are one of the greatest levers the State Library has in sustaining and enhancing the delivery of high quality, equitable and innovative library services in Alaska. As such, it is a program of the highest importance and should be reviewed more comprehensively and in depth than on an occasional basis by the group of people who administer it. The State Library also felt the recommendations for change identified in this evaluation would have a much greater likelihood of being accepted and adopted if the staff had a part in recognizing some of the deficiencies and a hand in crafting some solutions. It was also clear that outside grant evaluators and librarians with knowledge of and expertise in specific content areas identified in the plan were needed to bring fresh and "unbiased" eyes to the evaluation process.

Every grant awarded in the three years of the evaluation period was reviewed by a grant evaluator using a standard evaluation worksheet (Appendix B). The grant attribute criteria were suggested by some of the grant attributes asked for by IMLS (e.g. regional/statewide impact, innovation) and by grant attributes that Library Development considered to be key to the success of a project (e.g. meeting stated goals, significant benefits for the target audience, and contribution to state goals). The grant final reports, both the one submitted by the grantee and the one submitted by the State Library to IMLS, were used as source documents for the grant evaluation. The initial grant application was available for review upon request. Each evaluator was provided a copy of the 2002-2007 state plan so they could rate each grant's alignment with and contribution to its corresponding plan goals (items 6 f and g). Grant reviewers were encouraged to include any additional comments they had with respect to either the grant attributes or the grant overall. Many of the most valuable suggestions made by grant reviewers included in the text of this document were made in the comments area.

Grants over \$50,000 were automatically assigned to an outside (i.e., to the State Library) paid evaluator, with the exception of the library automation grants (reviewed in activity area 1.4), which were evaluated, as a group, to a new State Library employee with recent experience in acquiring and installing a library automation system (see Appendix C for a complete list of grant evaluators). Grants over \$100,000 were automatically assigned to two reviewers. The remainder of the grants were reviewed and rated either by outside evaluators or Library Development or other State Library staff members, either with specific subject expertise (i.e., cataloging grants were reviewed by a cataloger) or with little direct experience with a particular grant project or program to reduce the potential for bias. The in-depth analysis of training grants, of which there were a great number, was conducted by a team of Library Development staff members with the assistance of an outside paid evaluator.

The completed grant evaluation worksheets and the grant final reports were then given to the goal leader, the Library Staff Development staff member (see Appendix C), responsible for compiling the information and data for each goal into a narrative report based on a set of content and format guidelines. Each goal leader worked with an outside content expert (see Appendix C) on the overall goal assessment and narrative as part of the evaluation process. Outside experts played a variety of roles. They assisted the goal leader in reviewing the grants and compiling the grant evaluation data. They wrote and reviewed the finished text, helped determine the rating for the overall goal, and crafted the concluding recommendations. The Head of Library Development and the Grants Administrator edited the final goal narratives for uniformity and clarity and wrote the remaining sections of the overall evaluation. The final draft was reviewed and approved by the State Librarian.

Cost of the Evaluation Project

The five-year evaluation project cost the Alaska State Library \$11,950, as follows:

External grant evaluators and goal team leaders	
50 hours of work @ \$50.00	\$2,500
Alaska State Library staff involvement	
315 hours of work @ \$30.00	\$9,450
Grand total	\$11,950

Appendix A

LSTA-Funded Grants Awarded During State FY2003 (Federal PY 2002 LSTA Funds)

Statewide Grant Projects

800# ILL and Reference, Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$42,845
2003 Alaska Library Association Annual Conference, AkLA	\$10,000
Alaska Project, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$15,510
Public Library Directors' Workshop/DIRLEAD, AkLA	\$23,328
Reciprocal Borrowing Card and Logo, UAA Consortium Library	\$2,385
Regional Services, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$148,069
Regional Services, Juneau Public Libraries	\$80,317
Research and Resource Library Directors' Meetings, AkLA	\$872
Summer Reading Program Enhancement 2003, AkLA	\$2,681
UA/ASL Shared Telecom Coordinator, University of Alaska	\$72,500
Virtual Reference Service, UAA Consortium Library	\$29,678

Individual or Regional Grant Projects

Advanced Collection Workshop Series Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$5,725
Alaska Native Oral Literature and Interview on Tape Preservation Project, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$3,000
Alaska Studies/Foreign Language Collection, Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$20,000
Automation & Electronic Linkage, Glennallen Public Library	\$10,439
Bethel Schools Library Automated Circulation System, Lower Kuskokwim School District	\$44,200
Book Blitz Cataloging Training, AkLA	\$7,503
Cataloging Small Business Development Collection, UAA Consortium Library	\$7,500
Computer for Aniak, Aniak Public Library	\$3,000
Elim Library Automation Project, Elim Public Library	\$5,750
Government Documents Librarians' Workshop, AkLA	\$3,135
Library Circulation Computer, Anchor Point Public Library	\$1,614
Library Web Project, Hoonah Public Library	\$7,341
Mat-Su Library Consortium, Mat-Su Library Network	\$44,840
New Computers, Port Lions Public Library	\$2,000
Palmer/Kenai Youth Services Librarian Exchange, Palmer Public Library	\$1,980
School Library Advocacy Workshop, AkASL	\$1,375
Streaming Video Cooperation Project, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library and School District	\$8,000
T-1 Maintenance, Trapper Creek Public Library	\$2,880
Technology Upgrade Phase #3, Cordova Public Library	\$2,500

**LSTA-Funded Grants Awarded During State FY2004
(Federal PY 2003 LSTA Funds)**

Statewide Grant Projects

800# ILL and Reference, Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$46,675
2004 Summer Reading Program Enhancement 2004, AkLA	\$860
Alaska Project, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$16,190
Live Homework Help Statewide, UAA Consortium Library	\$6,600
Public Library Directors' Workshop/DIRLEAD, AkLA	\$16,124
Regional Services, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$149,820
Regional Services, Juneau Public Libraries	\$113,860
Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED), UAF Rasmuson Library	\$20,953
UA/ASL Shared Telecom Coordinator, University of Alaska	\$68,701

Individual or Regional Grant Projects

Ariel Friendly Scanner for Health Sciences Information Service, UAA Consortium Library	\$4,700
Basic Map Cataloging Workshop, AkLA	\$2,143
Collection Development in Spanish, ESL, Literacy, Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$10,000
Delegation to Indigenous Librarians Forum, AkLA	\$9,286
Dillingham Joint Catalog, Dillingham Public Library	\$10,451
Library Story Packets II, Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$11,236
Live Homework Help Pilot Project, Juneau Public Libraries	\$5,000
Mat-Su Library Consortium Phase II, Mat-Su Library Network	\$42,000
Petersburg Libraries Cooperative Migration, Petersburg Public Library	\$45,468
Public Library Association Conference Attendance, AkLA	\$5,907
Professional Education Support/Scholarships, AkLA	\$6,000
Rural Library Conference Attendance, AkLA	\$6,161
School Librarian Conference Travel Grant, AkASL	\$7,500
School Library Boot Camp, AkASL	\$24,335
Web Collection for Seward, Seward Public Library	\$1,200

**LSTA-Funded Grants Awarded During State FY2005
(Federal PY 2004 LSTA Funds)**

Statewide Grant Projects

800# ILL and Reference, Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$58,253
2005 Alaska Cooperative Summer Reading Project, AkLA	\$10,574
Alaska Project, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$15,110
Homework Help, UAA Consortium Library	\$3,656
Public Library Directors' Workshop/DIRLEAD, AkLA	\$22,933
Regional Services, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$184,473
Regional Services, Juneau Public Libraries	\$122,206
Statewide Library Electronic Doorway (SLED), UAF Rasmuson Library	\$9,775
UA/ASL Shared Telecom Coordinator, University of Alaska	\$78,800
Virtual Reference Services for Alaska: Year 2, AkLA	\$21,033

Individual or Regional Grant Projects

4% Indirect for Management of Grants, Alaska State Library	\$30,780
2005 School Library Boot Camp, AkASL	\$21,774
AkASL Conference Travel Grants, AkASL	\$8,774
Consumer Health Information Center, Kenai Public Library	\$5,617
Cordova Community Library System, Cordova Public Library	\$12,984
Kiosk Planning Grant, AkLA	\$328
Learning on Wheels, Southeast Island School District	\$1,042
Library Skills Workshop 2004 Southern Southeast Alaska, UAS Ketchikan Library	\$10,314
LKSD Alexandria Training, Lower Kuskokwim School District	\$9,700
Minority Language Literacy Project, Anchorage School District	\$10,810
Native Librarian Leadership Development, AkLA	\$4,836
Pacific Northwest Library Association Leadership Institute, AkLA	\$11,046
Professional Education Support/Scholarships, AkLA	\$6,000
Rural Library Conference Attendance, AkLA	\$5,100
Russian Language Reading Program, Willow Public Library	\$9,031
Small Library Institute for Management 2005, AkLA	\$24,131
Sitka Library Network Migration, Sitka Public Library	\$60,000
Village Library Technician Training, Tuzzy Consortium Library	\$10,417

**LSTA-Funded Grants Awarded During State FY2006
(Federal PY 2005 LSTA Funds)**

Statewide Grant Projects

800# ILL and Reference, Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$58,194
2006 Alaska Cooperative Summer Reading Project, AkLA	\$6,000
Alaska Library Network Organizing Meeting Phase 1, AkLA	\$4,362
Alaska Library Network Formation Grant Phase 2, AkLA	\$19,150
Alaska Project, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$1,435
Alaska's Virtual Library: Databases for Alaskans, UAA Consortium Library	\$43,503
Alaska's Virtual Library: Databases for Alaskans, UAA Consortium Library	\$32,907
Continuing Education Grants to 45 Public Libraries	\$37,640
OCLC Group Service Agreement License Supplemental Fee, Alaska State Library	\$11,458
Public Library Directors' Workshop/DIRLEAD, AkLA	\$25,419
Regional Services, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$175,959
Regional Services, Juneau Public Libraries	\$118,280
UA/ASL Shared Telecom Coordinator, University of Alaska	\$78,800

Individual or Regional Grant Projects

Building Library Marketing Communication Plans, AkLA	\$4,203
Computer Project, Tanana Public Library	\$4,000
Delegation to International Indigenous Librarians Forum 4, AkLA	\$8,090
Dragonfly Project Phase II, Haines Public Library	\$12,281
Internet Literacy Using SLED, Tuzzy Consortium Library	\$4,620
Kiosk Planning Grant: Phase 2, AkLA	\$1,715
LearnAlaska History Curriculum Material Project, AkLA	\$46,750
Library Automation Cataloging Software, Whale Pass Public Library	\$300
Listen Alaska/Overdrive Project, Alaska State Library	\$36,000
PALS Literacy & Libraries Project, Anchorage School District	\$36,520
Petersburg Historical Newspaper Access Project, Petersburg Public Library	\$8,178
PLA Results Boot Camp, AkLA	\$1,375
Professional Education Support/Scholarships, AkLA	\$12,000
School Library Assistants Automation Training Workshop, AkASL	\$24,475
Southeast Story Hour Grant, Ketchikan Public Library	\$11,949
Student Patron Computers, Kwethluk School Library	\$3,000

**LSTA-Funded Grants Awarded During State FY2007
(Federal PY 2006 LSTA Funds)**

Statewide Grant Projects

800# ILL and Reference, Anchorage Municipal Libraries	\$65,088
2007 Alaska Cooperative Summer Reading Project, AkLA	\$3,719
Alaska Library Network Year One, Alaska State Library	\$130,000
Alaska's Virtual Library: Live Homework Help, UAA Consortium Library	\$33,000
Continuing Education Grants to 34 Public Libraries	\$34,000
Listen Alaska Phase 2, Alaska State Library	\$40,000
OCLC Group Services Agreement License Supplemental Fee, Alaska State Library	\$13,394
Public Library Directors' Workshop/DIRLEAD, AkLA	\$24,134
Public Library TechLine Support Desk, University of Alaska	\$30,000
Regional Services, Fairbanks North Star Borough Public Library	\$165,000
Regional Services, Juneau Public Libraries	\$111,070
Research & Resource Library Directors' Meetings, AkLA	\$3,120

Individual or Regional Grant Projects

2006 Pacific Northwest Library Association Leadership Institute, AkLA	\$8,448
2007 Alaska Library Association Conference, AkLA	\$10,000
AkASL Conference Travel Grants, AkASL	\$13,250
Building Local library Marketing Communication Plans, AkLA	\$6,000
Destiny Library Software and Conversion, Anchor Point Public Library	\$3,798
First City Library Catalog Conversion Phase 1, Ketchikan Public Library	\$37,000
Governor Sarah Palin READ Poster Project, AkLA	\$1,435
Internet Literacy Using SLED Year Two, Tuzzy Consortium Library	\$4,640
Kodiak School Libraries Online, Kodiak School District	\$29,122
Linking Craig School Libraries and Craig Public Library, Craig School District	\$12,010
Professional Development Institute for Mid-Size Alaska Libraries, AkLA	\$19,510
Professional Education Support/Scholarships, AkLA	\$15,000
SIRSI Upgrade Project, Unalaska Public Library	\$26,000
Teen Programming Workshop, AkLA	\$11,515
Update the <i>Manual for Small Libraries in Alaska</i> , Ketchikan Public Library	\$7,592

Appendix B

Grant Evaluation Worksheet

1. Grant Evaluator Name: _____
2. Grant Title: _____
3. Grant Number: _____ State Plan Goal/Activity Number: _____
Activity Text (Copied from Alaska State Plan 2003 – 2007)

4. Grant accomplishments were clearly identified _____ Yes _____ No

5. In 2-3 sentences, briefly describe the major outputs and/or outcomes of this grant project:

6. On a scale of one (low) to five (high), please rate the attributes of this grant project:

a. Grant project successfully met its own goals and objectives:
1 (low) 2 3 4 5 (high)

b. Grant project had significant benefits for its target audience:
1 (low) 2 3 4 5 (high)

c. Grant project was cost effective: 1 (low) 2 3 4 5 (high)

d. Grant project was innovative: 1 (low) 2 3 4 5 (high)

e. Grant project had regional or statewide impact: 1 (low) 2 3 4 5 (high)

f. Grant project aligns closely with its AK STATE PLAN GOAL area:
1 (low) 2 3 4 5 (high)

g. Grant project made a significant contribution toward realizing its corresponding AK STATE PLAN GOAL:
1 (low) 2 3 4 5 (high)

7. Any additional comments? Please use the back of this form for any comments you wish to make on this grant and its impact on meeting the goals of the *Alaska State Plan 2003 – 2007*. We are interested in your opinion!

Appendix C

Grant Evaluators

Alaska State Library – Library Development Staff

- Nina Malyshev, Head, Library Development
- Sue Sherif, Children’s and Youth Services Coordinator
- Patience Frederiksen, Grants Administrator
- Aja Razumny, Public Library Coordinator
- Richard Greenfield, UA/ASL Telecom Coordinator
- Kerri Canepa, Alaska Library Network Coordinator

Alaska State Library – Library Staff

- Linda Thibodeau, Deputy State Librarian
- Rose Welton, Cataloging Librarian III

External Grant Evaluators

- Susan Elliott, Systems Head, UAA Consortium Library
- Ann Myren, Past President, Alaska Library Association & Library Consultant
- Lois Petersen, Retired School District Library Coordinator

Goal Teams

- Goal 1: Richard Greenfield and Della Matthis, E-Rate Coordinator
- Goal 2: Sue Sherif and Susan Elliott
- Goal 3: Nina Malyshev and Ann Myren
- Goal 4: Aja Razumny, Nina Malyshev, and Lois Petersen
- Goal 5: Patience Frederiksen, Linda Thibodeau, and Ann Myren

Appendix D

Evaluators' Ratings of LSTA-Funded Grants for State FY2004 – FY2006 Sorted by Goal and Activity

See attached Excel spreadsheet.