

State Library of Louisiana

LSTA Five-Year Plan

2008-2012

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STATE LIBRARY OF LOUISIANA

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Overview

Focus groups with stakeholders and surveys of public library directors across Louisiana identified four needs consistent with LSTA purposes that we have chosen for this State Programs Five Year Plan. The four needs revolve around the low literacy rates in Louisiana, the general poverty and limited library services in some rural areas, the need for additional services to special populations and the need for integration of technology for ease of use and optimization. Specifically:

1. In Louisiana, 80% of all 4th and 8th grades do not read at a proficient level (*KidsCount*). Research shows correlations between reading skills in 4th grade and early literacy skills before school entry. (*From Neurons to Neighborhoods; The Science of Early Childhood Development. Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development. Shonkooff, Jack P. and Deborah A. Phillips, Editors. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2000*) Library staff need encouragement and training to work with their local childhood service providers and educators so that these entities can prepare those children in their care to be ready to read. Keeping children reading once they have begun will encourage lifelong learning and a love of reading. Approaching the literacy issue in Louisiana by working with children before they enter school, offers the best return on investment, but it will take longer to realize the results.
2. Louisiana library services rank close to the bottom in most measures. Nineteen percent of Louisiana's Public Library directors do not have an MLS. (*Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report, 2005*) Most of these libraries are woefully understaffed. The State Library provides much-needed support and training to enable these staff to meet the most basic needs of their communities. Emphasis will be on increasing the percentage of public libraries that meet the "essential" standards for library service as established by the Louisiana Library Association.
3. It is estimated that 74,880 Louisiana citizens either have trouble reading or a disability that prevents them from reading easily (Chu, Tracy, "Estimating the prevalence of legal blindness and visual impairment," American Foundation for the Blind, 1/27/03). In addition, Louisiana has seen an increase in the Spanish-speaking population since the storms of 2005. It is critical to provide more information and reading material to these new residents. Increased outreach to new communities and renewed funding for the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped will allow more individuals and institutions to participate.
4. No one seamless "go-to" place for Louisiana citizens to obtain current and reliable information exists at this time. This can be accomplished by integrating library catalogs, library web pages, proprietary databases, free web resources and interlibrary loan services into a comprehensive virtual library for Louisiana citizens. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of Louisiana households do not have Internet access and must rely on public libraries to access needed services.

We feel that meeting these four priorities will provide the most direct impact on the lives of Louisianans. Even though the hurricanes of 2005 devastated many libraries, we have not concentrated on the past, but rather are moving library services forward throughout the state through new programs, goals and initiatives. The economic downturn of 2008-2009 has affected Louisiana libraries because they are busier than ever and local funding is flat.

Mission

The mission of the State Library of Louisiana is to foster a culture of literacy, promote awareness of our state's rich literary heritage and ensure public access to and preservation of informational, educational, cultural and recreational resources, especially those unique to Louisiana.

Need #1: Foster a culture of literacy and a love of reading among Louisiana's children by partnering with appropriate state agencies, childcare organizations, schools and public libraries and instituting best practices wherever needed.

Summary Needs Assessment:

- 80% of Louisiana 4th and 8th graders read below the proficient level.
- 42% of all Louisiana children live in a home where no adult has a full time job.
- 44% of all Louisiana children have no computer at home and 53% have no Internet access at home.
- 25% of the Louisiana population over age 25 is a high school dropout.

*--Kids Count, State Level Data Online, searched 6/17/2007.
www.kidscount.org/sld/profile_results.jsp?d=1&r=20*

Goal: Increase the number of Louisiana children reading at or above grade level as measured on fourth grade standardized tests by taking a leadership role in providing statewide results-based literacy programs, reading programs and opportunities to develop a love of reading.

LSTA Purpose: Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations; target library and information services to person having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families with incomes below the poverty line.

Key Output Targets:

- Increase participation in statewide children's programs to 110,000 per year. (Includes Summer Reading Programs and LA Young Readers' Choice Program)
- By 2008, increase attendance at children's programs at the Louisiana Book Festival by 10% through improved marketing and outreach to non-readers and the under-served.

Key Outcome Targets:

- Children will improve scores on fourth grade, standardized tests by at least 2 percentage points by 2012.
- Children will show that participating in the summer reading program will maintain or improve reading level over the summer months by 2012 as evidenced on a study accomplished in cooperation with at least one public library.

Program:

The program will target library staff training, and reading programs for children, teachers and caregivers. Although concentrating on children's literacy level will provide the best return on

investment of LSTA funds, it is understood that it will be years before any measurable improvements in children's literacy levels can be cited. Activities will include:

- Provide much-needed tutoring to school age children in libraries and at home through a statewide online service. *Begin 2010*
- Build a children's portal to the Louisiana Library Connection virtual library, to include both proprietary databases and free sites of high quality and relevance. *Time frame 2008-2009*
- Continue to provide information, materials, training, coordination and promotion for children's and teen reading programs, including Summer Reading Program, Teen Reading Program, and Louisiana Young Readers' Choice Award Program *Time Frame 2008-2012*

Need #2: Louisiana library services rank close to the bottom in most measures. Nineteen percent of Louisiana's Public Library directors do not have an MLS. (*Public Libraries in Louisiana: Statistical Report, 2005*) Most of these libraries are woefully understaffed. The State Library provides much-needed support and training to enable these staff to meet the most basic needs of their communities. Additional training and consulting so that public libraries can implement the programs elucidated in this LSTA plan will be an important component.

Summary Needs Assessment:

- Sixteen out of 67 Louisiana public library directors' salaries are even now below the national entry-level librarian salaries and 91% are below the national average for library directors. This is significant in that, as the non-MLS directors retire over the next few years, it will be impossible to attract qualified applicants to replace them because of the salaries. (*Public Libraries in Louisiana Statistical Report, 2005*)
- A 2007 survey of Louisiana public library directors indicated that help with technology is the second most-needed service from the State Library (first priority is assistance with buildings). Third priority is helping to attract and retain qualified librarians.
- The same survey indicated that ninety-two percent of public library directors are "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with Library Development's services. However, there were a number of survey responses that indicated that not all public library directors are aware of, or using, all the services available to them.
- Most public libraries do not have a continuing education line item in their budgets; the only training they can afford is that which is offered by the State Library in order to further the goals of the LSTA programs.
- Ninety percent of Louisiana public libraries have an annual circulation per capita below the national average of 7.10. Louisiana averages 3.90. (*Public Libraries in Louisiana Statistical Report, 2005*)

Goal: Foster the ongoing professional development of library staff throughout the state, enabling them to be well-informed and competent to provide superior services to their constituencies and make most effective use of programs provided through LSTA.

LSTA Purpose: Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats; develop library services that provide all users access to information.

Key Output Targets:

- Provide consulting visits to at least 80% of public libraries each year.
- Provide a minimum of 80 educational opportunities per year for public library staff.

Key Outcome Targets:

- Improve public library service so that ten percent more public libraries reach or exceed the “Essential” Louisiana standard in terms of circulation, number of public access computers, and collection size by 2012.
- No Louisiana citizen will be more than a 30 minute drive away from a library offering free Internet access.

Program:

The program will consist of high quality training, consulting and support for public libraries.

Specific activities are:

- Increase convenience, quality, quantity and relevancy of State Library workshops taught through out the State; pilot at least three synchronous, web-based instructor-led workshops for public library staff; convene and work with CE Advisory Committee. *Time frame: 2008-2012*
- Provide consulting to libraries and governing authorities in all areas of library administration including advocacy, strategic planning, building programs, legislative issues, staff development, funding, statistics-gathering and program development. *Time frame 2008-2012*
- Develop and present a multi-day leadership institute for middle managers to prepare them to step into the role of library director. *Time frame 2009-2010*
- Provide technology support in the form of a technology consultant that travels throughout the state assisting libraries with technology planning and implementation. *Time frame 2008-2012*
- Provide training for public library staff in weeding and collection development. *Time frame 2008-2009*
- Increase number and type of workshops presented by State Library staff in order to share the expertise of practitioners with public library staff.
- Implement online training via instructor-led webinars with a goal of 50% of all non-technology training will be delivered electronically by 2012.

Need #3: Improve services to special needs populations through increased outreach and implementation of digital technologies.

Summary Needs Assessment:

- It is estimated that 74,880 Louisianans have difficulty using a library or reading print materials. (Chu, Tracy, “Estimating the prevalence of legal blindness and visual impairment,” American Foundation for the Blind, 1/27/03). At present, 10.7% of them are active users of Louisiana’s regional library for the blind and physically handicapped.
- The unserved, underserved and unemployed have become a greater percentage of Louisiana’s population. Many of the 57% of households without Internet access are homes to those with serious literacy problems and deficiencies in basic skills which make them unemployable.
- Analog technologies are outdated and equipment is difficult to acquire and repair.
- There are 36,662 prisoners incarcerated in Louisiana prisons. Louisiana’s rate of recidivism is 43%. (LA Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections, *Statistics Briefing Sheet*. www.doc.louisiana.gov/statistics/bb.htm, printed on 6/18/2007) Literacy levels in Louisiana prisons are abysmally low.
- There has been a major influx of Hispanic workers into Louisiana following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that 100,000 came to the devastated Gulf Coast following the hurricanes. The Pew Center for Hispanic Studies estimated that Louisiana has up to 45,000 undocumented Hispanic workers. The Louisiana Recovery Authority found that New Orleans gained 4000 Hispanics since 2004; Hispanics currently make up 9.6% of the total population of Orleans parish.
- The Vietnamese population of Louisiana is 24,358, an increase of 47% over ten years. Louisiana has the ninth largest Vietnamese population in the United States. (National Alliance for Vietnamese American Service Agencies of Washington, www.navasa.org/html_stats/Ranking_State_50.htm , printed 6/17/2007)

Goal: Provide additional services to current special needs users and the underserved, increasing overall participation by current non-users.

LSTA Purpose: Target 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; target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families with incomes below the poverty line.

Key Output Targets:

- Increase the attendance of minorities at the Louisiana Book Festival by a minimum of 10% by 2009.

Key Outcome Targets:

- Increase BPH usage by nursing homes, schools and other institutions by 5%.
- Increase usage of BPH services to pre-hurricane levels, i.e. annual circulation will exceed 195,000 by 2012.

Program:

The program will consist of outreach to special needs populations and an emphasis on materials and services for non-English speaking residents. Specific activities are:

- Migrate 10-15% of blind and physically handicapped (BPH) users to digital media per year over the next five years. *Time frame 2008-2012*
- Establish rotating collections of large print materials in at least 5 pilot public libraries. *Time frame 2010-2011*
- Offer a minimum of one training session per year for prison library workers. *Time frame 2008-2012*
- Produce a minimum of 15 quality, recorded books of Louisiana materials per year. *Time frame 2008-2012*
- Develop a foreign language collection of both fiction and non-fiction at the State Library and make it available via interlibrary loan; collection size to reach at least 1000 new titles by 2012. *Time frame 2008-2012*
- Analyze and update the Hi-Lo (High interest -- low reading level) collection and market it to prison libraries. *Time frame 2008-2009*
- Provide training and consulting services to libraries in meeting ADA requirements. *Time frame 2009-2010*
- Provide end-user training and resources in basic job hunting skills and technology usage. *(ongoing)*

Need #4: Citizens do not have one reliable “go-to” gateway for current and reliable information. This can be accomplished by integrating library catalogs, library web pages, proprietary databases, free web resources and interlibrary loan services into a comprehensive virtual library for Louisiana citizens.

Summary Needs Assessment:

- Nineteen (28%) of Louisiana’s public libraries do not have a web page or their web page is static.
- Fifty-seven percent (57%) of Louisiana households do not have Internet access (NTIA 2007)
- Twenty-one (31%) of Louisiana’s public libraries do not have their online catalog on the web.
- The statewide databases are located on a separate URL and have no brand or name recognition.
- Louisiana public library collections are invisible to the major search engines on the Web.
- An OCLC report, *Perceptions of Library and Information Resources* (2005), revealed that library websites are seldom the place where information seekers begin their search; it is probably even less often in Louisiana.

Goal: Make current and relevant information readily available to and convenient for users by expanding access to information through statewide database subscriptions; an effective interlibrary loan system and van delivery service; technology and Internet support; a coordinated approach to reference services; and making library collections more visible on the Web.

LSTA Purpose: Developing library services that provide all users access to information through local, state and national electronic networks; providing electronic and other linkages among and between all types of libraries.

Key Output Targets:

- Statewide annual database searches will reach 1,000,000 by 2012.
- Interlibrary loan among public libraries will increase by 10% by 2012.
- A virtual reference service will be piloted in at least 3 public libraries by 2012.
- Increase the number of interlibrary loans among public libraries by 10% by 2012.
- State Library will provide Erate and technology planning assistance and technology support and consulting to public libraries.

Key Outcome Targets:

- Every Louisiana citizen will be within a half hour's drive of a library offering free access to the Internet.
- 100% of public libraries will provide an online catalog for their communities.
- 100% of public libraries will have a non-static, current website that they are able to maintain themselves.

Program:

The program will emphasize technology support and training, integration of existing technology resources and increased ease of use for the patrons. Specific activities are:

1. Provide electronic access to a core set of statewide databases for use by citizens of all ages; redesign the existing website; design a children's portal to electronic resources. *Time frame: 2008-2009*
2. Implement a new interlibrary loan system: select system, train all interlibrary loan staff; implement system; promote advantages to the general public. *Time frame: 2008-2009*
3. Launch a cooperative virtual reference service in at least three public libraries: select libraries; select software; develop policies and procedures; provide staff training; market service to the communities; implement and measure service. *Time frame: 2009-2010*
4. Continue to provide technology support and consulting to enable libraries to offer and support free access to the Internet. *Time frame: 2008-2012*
5. Contribute public library holdings to OCLC or other entity such that there will be one union catalog for all Louisiana libraries and it will be visible on the Web. *Time frame 2011-2012*

Summary of Planning and Implementation Procedures

This section provides information about the process of obtaining stakeholder feedback, and communication and monitoring procedures the State Library is putting into place to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the programs outlined in this plan.

All Louisiana state agencies were mandated to create new strategic plans beginning July 2008. This has been done for Louisiana and this LSTA plan is a subset of goals and activities reflected on the state plan.

Stakeholder Involvement Procedures

State Library of Louisiana planning for the next five years has encompassed multiple activities:

- A review of the accomplishments of the past five years
- A 2007 satisfaction survey among public library directors
- An 2007 emailed needs assessment of public library directors
- A facilitator-led planning meeting with the LSTA Advisory Committee
- A review of various statistical publications
- A review of a stakeholder survey conducted in FY05-06
- Two staff planning sessions and their knowledge and analysis of national trends

The public library directors represent the most involved of the stakeholder groups. Written and emailed surveys indicated that buildings, coping with technology and staff training and development are primary concerns both now and in the future. A face-to-face meeting was held in May 2007 to allow them to rank their priorities for the next five years.

Also in May 2007, a facilitator-led session with the LSTA Advisory Committee revealed the increased need for distance education opportunities and outreach to Spanish-speaking populations. The LSTA Advisory Committee is composed of representatives of public libraries, academic libraries, school libraries, legislative and governing bodies and institutional libraries.

A draft of the new five-year plan was circulated to public library directors, the LSTA Advisory Committee and State Library staff for comment; it was also posted on the State Library's website with an email address for the general public to provide input.

A strategic planning retreat with department heads was conducted on February 26th, 2010 to revise directions in light of recent economic developments. Changes to both the LSTA plan and the State Library's existing state strategic plan were suggested.

Communication Procedures

Once approved by IMLS, the new five-year plan will be posted to the State Library's website and distributed in print form to the LSTA Advisory Committee, the public library directors and legislative and governing officials. In addition, it will be distributed throughout the state via the

Louisiana State Documents Depository system. The revised version will be posted to the State Library's website.

Progress in accomplishing the goals of the new plan will be reported annually at the LSTA Advisory Committee meetings as well as at meetings of public library directors. Any changes to the plan will be made with stakeholder involvement and sent to IMLS for approval.

Monitoring Procedures

All Louisiana state agencies are required to input quarterly statistics into the Louisiana Performance Accountability System (LAPAS). These statistics are composed of both output and outcome measures and show progress toward goals; this website is available to the general public. Many of the performance measures used in evaluating this five-year plan are the same ones reported on the State system.

The State Library collects annual statistics from the public libraries via BiblioStat Collect, reports the findings to NCES and publishes an annual report in both print and electronic form. This will be a major resource for tracking and monitoring success of statewide programs.

Responsibility for gathering statistics and feedback and evaluating success of programs will rest with the Deputy State Librarian and the Associate State Librarian for Library Development.

Once per year, a report will be presented to the LSTA Advisory Committee and to the public library directors outlining accomplishments and expenditures.