

**The District of Columbia Public Library's  
Implementation of  
The Library Services & Technology Act  
Five-Year Plan  
2003-2007**

**An Independent Evaluation Prepared by  
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March 6, 2007**



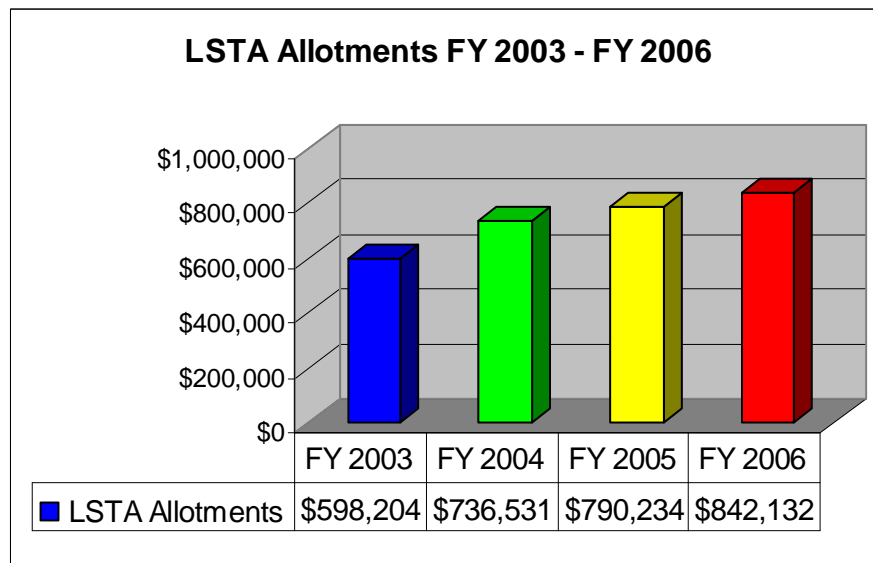
This project is made possible by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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# I. Introductory Statement and Summary of Impact of Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Funds to Support Library Services in the State (District of Columbia)

The District of Columbia Public Library (DCPL) is unique in that it is at once a public library serving a single municipality and, for purposes of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), a state library administrative agency. Because LSTA allotments are largely population based, the District of Columbia (D.C.) receives the second smallest amount allocated to the “states.” Only the State of Wyoming receives less in LSTA funds. LSTA funds available to the District totaled \$598,204 in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003, \$736,531 in FY 2004, and \$790,234 in FY 2005. The FY 2006 allocation was \$842,132.

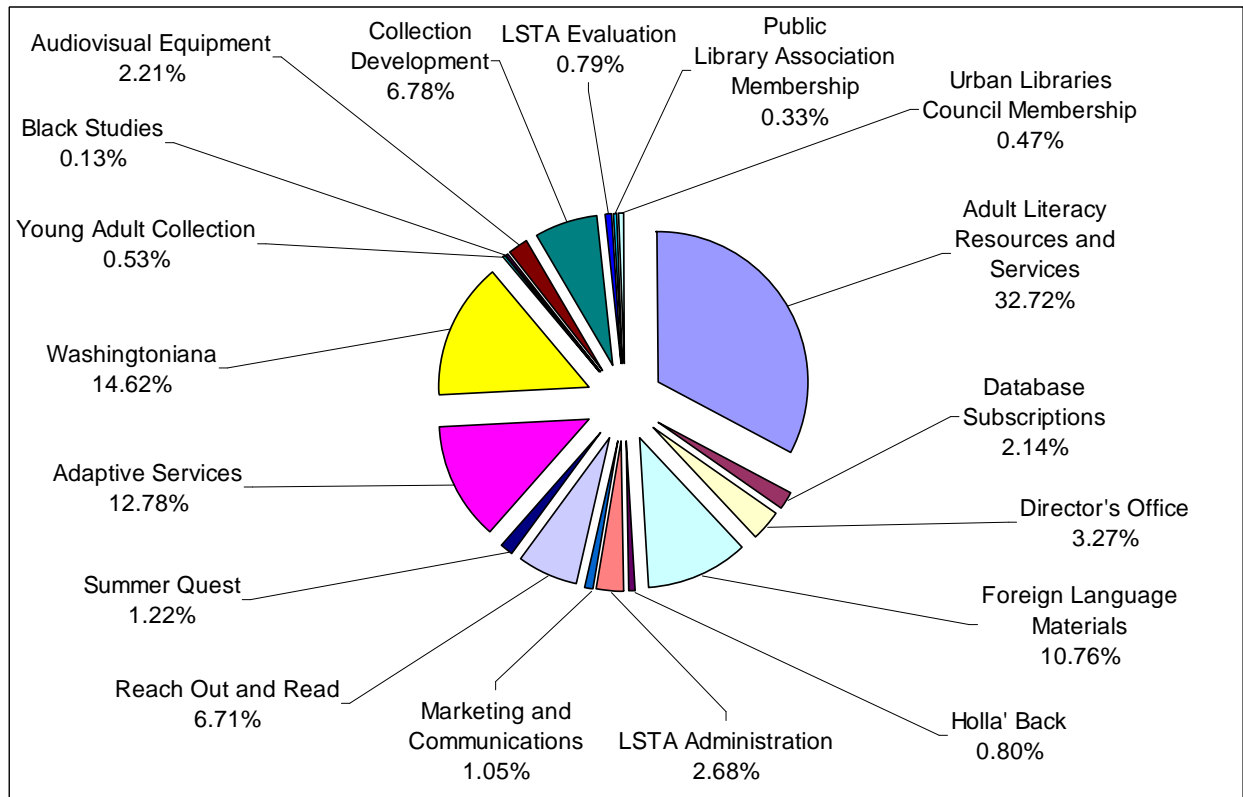


**Graph 1 – LSTA Allotments FY 2003 – FY 2006**

The U. S. Census Bureau estimated that the population for the District of Columbia in 2005 was 550,521. If the FY 2005 allocation of \$790,234 is applied, D.C.’s LSTA allotment in that year represented approximately \$1.44 per capita. This represents a very small portion of total expenditures for library and information services in the District. Local revenue for public library services alone exceeded \$30 million (approximately \$56 per capita) in FY 2005.

In spite of the fact that LSTA represents a relatively small percentage of the funding available for providing library and information services in the District, the importance of the program is considerable. This is particularly true in three District of Columbia Public Library program areas. Adult literacy services, library services to individuals with special needs (Adaptive Services), and the Washingtoniana Division are, to a significant degree, dependent on LSTA support. From FY 2003

through FY 2005, over 60% (60.12%) of the LSTA funds allocated to the District were directed toward these three areas. Graph 2 below shows how LSTA funds were allocated across various programs and initiatives over the three fiscal years covered by this evaluation.



**Graph 2 – LSTA Allocation FY 2003 – FY 2005**

Virtually all of the LSTA funds allocated to the District of Columbia Public Library (serving as a state library agency) since FY 2003 have been used internally; that is, they have been allocated to divisions and programs of DCPL. Unfortunately, very little LSTA funding has been directed toward planning, innovation, or cooperative efforts with other types of libraries during this period.

However, this is beginning to change. Within the last year, the D.C. LSTA Advisory Council, with representatives of many types of libraries and the general public has been formed. Guidelines for a competitive grant program were developed and released, and, to date, three subgrants have been awarded. These projects, all of which were awarded to school libraries, are in progress and a second grant cycle is under way with grant applications due March 30, 2007.

Furthermore, DCPL is making a real effort to gain a better understanding of the Institute of Museum and Library Service's (IMLS) expectations in regard to the LSTA program and to implement evaluation and accountability systems that meet or exceed all IMLS/Federal standards. The DCPL Grants Manager, who serves as

the District's LSTA Coordinator, has now taken seven courses on federal grants management, thereby completing a certificate program. In addition, three DCPL staff members, including the LSTA Coordinator, attended the two-day outcome-based evaluation (OBE) workshop sponsored by IMLS. Work is under way to ensure that an outcome-based approach is integrated into the 2008 – 2012 LSTA Plan.

The District of Columbia Public Library's recent history in managing LSTA funds has not been exemplary. DCPL has, in the past, been cited by IMLS for ongoing concerns regarding adherence to Federal record-keeping requirements, documentation, and attention to Federal reporting and spending requirements. For these reasons, the District of Columbia was classified as a "high risk" state. DCPL has been working diligently to correct all shortcomings in regard to the LSTA program and IMLS has recognized these efforts in recent communications. As of February 2007, DCPL's "high risk" designation was lifted.

Under the guidance of its new Grants Manager and with the full support of a new administration at the Library, DCPL appears to be well on its way to addressing the concerns that have been raised. While much work remains to be done, especially in terms of internal evaluation of programs, significant progress has been made in a relatively short period of time. The District of Columbia seems poised to take the LSTA program in a new direction that promises to maximize the impact of the LSTA funds allocated to DCPL for the benefit of all District residents.

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

It was noted in the introductory section that DCPL is unique in that it serves both as a municipal public library and as a state library administrative agency under Federal Law. However, despite this distinctive characteristic, DCPL has the same responsibilities as all other state library agencies in regard to LSTA. Among these responsibilities is to use the LSTA funds allocated to it to further one or more of six purposes that are outlined in the 2003 reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996.

The Act (20 U.S.C. Chapter 72 9141) specifies that a state library administrative agency shall expend funds for one or more of the following:

1. To expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages
2. To develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international electronic networks
3. To provide electronic and other linkages among and between all types of libraries
4. To develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations
5. To 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
6. To target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line [as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9902 (2))] applicable to a family of the size involved

The LSTA program, as part of the Museum and Library Services Act, was operating under the language of its initial authorization (1996) when the District of Columbia's 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan was written in 2002. Although states were aware that a modification of the statement of purpose in the Act was likely, and while the proposed language was available, some state library agencies, including the District of Columbia, chose to structure their plans around the 1996 language rather than around the language quoted above. The 1996 language and the reauthorization language adopted in 2003 are largely compatible, but there are some differences. The 1996 language is recounted below.

Of the funds provided to a State library administrative agency under section 214, such agency shall expend, either directly or through subgrants of cooperative agreements, at least 96 percent of such funds for —

- (1) (A) Establishing or enhancing electronic linkages among or between libraries;
  - (B) Electronically linking libraries with educational, social, or information services;
  - (C) Assisting libraries in accessing information through electronic networks;
  - (D) Encouraging libraries in different areas, and encouraging different types of libraries, to establish consortia and share resources; or
  - (E) Paying costs for libraries to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies; and,
- (2) Targeting library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 673(2) of the Community Services Block Grant Act [42 U.S.C. 9902(2)] applicable to a family of the size involved.

On the following pages are two charts that show how the 10 Goals in the DCPL Five-Year (2003 – 2007) LSTA Plan are aligned with the 1996 LSTA purposes and with the current (2003 revised) purposes.

**----- LSTA Purposes (1996) -----**

<b>----- DCPL Goals -----</b>	<b>Establish or enhance electronic linkages among or between libraries</b>	<b>Electronically link libraries with educational, social, or information services</b>	<b>Assist libraries in accessing information through electronic networks</b>	<b>Encourage libraries in different areas, and encourage different types of libraries, to establish consortia and share resources</b>	<b>Pay costs for libraries to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies</b>	<b>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</b>
<b>Goal 1: Increase and improve granting activity at DCPL.</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	
<b>Goal 2: Narrow the digital divide for the residents of the District of Columbia by providing increased access to public computing, and the training to use the computing resources.</b>					<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Goal 3: Help to lower the illiteracy rate in the District of Columbia, by providing literacy and other educational programs, and serving as a clearinghouse for literacy services provided by other agencies and organizations throughout the city.</b>						<b>X</b>
<b>Goal 4: Improve the reading readiness and reading skills of D.C. children and young adults by providing a variety of innovative, and creative after school, early childhood, and family literacy programs, especially in areas with large concentrations of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients.</b>						<b>X</b>
<b>Goal 5: Provide and improve library services for underserved residents of the District of Columbia, especially those with diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and disabilities.</b>		<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Goal 6: Improve reference services by providing extensive training to reference staff on the effective use of the Internet to answer customer questions at the library and remotely.</b>			<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>Goal 7: Promote the preservation of local history resources by developing programs and collaborating with other agencies, and types of libraries in the area of local history.</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>		
<b>Goal 8: Increase access to government documents in both print and non-print formats at DCPL.</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>Goal 9: Develop a strategic plan for the Black Studies Division of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library with special emphasis on the use of technology.</b>	<b>X</b>			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>Goal 10: Develop and implement a marketing plan to establish the framework for a strategic approach to marketing, promoting and advertising public library services to targeted communities in the District of Columbia.</b>						<b>X</b>

**Chart 1 – Alignment of DCPL Goals with 1996 LSTA Purposes**



**----- LSTA Purposes (2003) -----**

<b>----- DCPL Goals -----</b>	Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages	Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international electronic networks;	Provide electronic and other linkages among and between all types of libraries	Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations	Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to people 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
Goal 1: Increase and improve granting activity at DCPL.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Goal 2: Narrow the digital divide for the residents of the District of Columbia by providing increased access to public computing, and the training to use the computing resources.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Goal 3: Help to lower the illiteracy rate in the District of Columbia, by providing literacy and other educational programs, and serving as a clearinghouse for literacy services provided by other agencies and organizations throughout the city.					<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Goal 4: Improve the reading readiness and reading skills of D.C. children and young adults by providing a variety of innovative, and creative after school, early childhood, and family literacy programs, especially in areas with large concentrations of Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) recipients.				<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Goal 5: Provide and improve library services for underserved residents of the District of Columbia, especially those with diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and disabilities.					<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Goal 6: Improve reference services by providing extensive training to reference staff on the effective use of the Internet to answer customer questions at the library and remotely.		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	
Goal 7: Promote the preservation of local history resources by developing programs and collaborating with other agencies, and types of libraries in the area of local history.	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>		
Goal 8: Increase access to government documents in both print and non-print formats at DCPL.	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>				
Goal 9: Develop a strategic plan for the Black Studies Division of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library with special emphasis on the use of technology.			<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
Goal 10: Develop and implement a marketing plan to establish the framework for a strategic approach to marketing, promoting and advertising public library services to targeted communities in the District of Columbia.	<b>X</b>					<b>X</b>

**Chart 2 – Alignment of DCPL Goals with Current (2003) LSTA Purposes**

It was noted earlier that adult literacy services, library services to individuals with special needs and support for the District of Columbia's Washingtoniana Division account for over 60% (60.12%) of LSTA expenditures during the FY 2003 – FY 2005 period. If expenditures for library collections and electronic resources are added to this mix, over 80% (80.33%) of D.C.'s total allocation is accounted for. However, many of the goals, key output targets and key outcome targets included in the 2003 – 2007 Plan are **not** closely related to these expenditures.

In fact, the evaluators were unable to find any significant LSTA-funded activity that related to two of the goals cited in the 2003 – 2007 Plan. The goals without LSTA activity were:

- ***Goal 2 – Narrow the digital divide for the residents of the District of Columbia by providing increased access to public computing and training to use the computing resources.***
- ***Goal 6 – Improve reference services by providing extensive training to reference staff on the effective use of the Internet to answer customer questions at the library and remotely.***

Part of the reason for this was that the Board of Library Trustees decided that DCPL would not comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act (CIPA). Lack of compliance with CIPA rules out the use of Federal grant money for technology hardware. Lack of local funding to compensate for this prohibition prevented DCPL from making great strides in increasing the availability of public access computers across the system.

Very limited LSTA funding was directed toward several of the other goals. However, this is not to say that no progress was made toward achieving these goals. In fact, the charts on the following pages do show some progress under these goal areas. While an evaluation of all of DCPL's activities is well beyond the scope of this evaluation, the evaluators have made an attempt to identify whether advances have been made in program areas that were included in the plan that did not receive LSTA funding. However, it should be noted that the progress realized under goals 2 and 6 does not appear to be related to LSTA funding.

Even in areas that did receive LSTA support, achievement is often attributable not to LSTA funding alone but to a mix of local and LSTA expenditures. This is particularly the case in regard to "community youth services" efforts carried out under the plan. Although LSTA funding accounted for relatively small portions of the support for programs such as Reach Out and Read (ROAR), Holla' Back, and Summer Quest, LSTA support was nevertheless significant in terms of accomplishing the output and outcome targets established in the 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan.

Chart 3, which continues for several pages, summarizes the District of Columbia Public Library's progress toward its goals and achievement in the key output and

outcome targets it identified in its Five-Year (2003 – 2007) LSTA Plan. The guidelines provided by IMLS for the creation of the 2003 – 2007 LSTA plans specified the inclusion of “key **output** targets” and “key **outcome** targets.” This was an effort on the part of IMLS to encourage state library agencies to adopt evaluation techniques in the development and implementation of their plans. Unfortunately, DCPL’s 2003 – 2007 Plan reveals very little understanding of the outcome-based evaluation concept. In fact, what are routinely identified as outcomes are almost without exception outputs (measures of activity) rather than outcomes (benefits that occur to participants of a program). Nevertheless, we have differentiated the 2003 – 2007 Plan’s “outcomes” from the Plan’s “outputs” by applying a stippled background to the measures identified as outcomes.

An “X” is placed in columns labeled “No Progress,” “Progressing,” “Met Goal” or “Surpassed Goal” based on the evaluators’ best assessment of the progress that has been or is being made in regard to each objective/target. Many of the targets in the 2003 – 2007 Plan included dates for completion. The evaluators have largely ignored these dates in creating the following chart. In other words, if a target slated for 2004 was met in 2006, we have indicated that the target was met. One other note is pertinent at this point. The evaluators discovered that documentation of progress toward the completion of many of the Plan’s objectives was very poor. Statistical data were often lacking and many of the conclusions reached regarding completion of objectives are based on non-quantitative data.

**Chart 3: Summary of Progress toward Goals and Key Output and Outcome Targets, 2002 -2005**

<b>GOAL 1: Increase and improve granting activity at DCPL.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
<b>Key Output Target 1.1. Develop a position description for a grants manager by November 2002.</b>			X	
<b>Key Output Target 1.2. Hire a grants manager by January 2003.</b>			X	
<b>Key Output Target 1.3. Develop a subgrant procedure for LSTA funding.</b>			X	
<b>Key Outcome Target 1.1. Increase the number of grant applications by 10% each year of the plan.</b>		X		

<b>GOAL 1: Increase and improve granting activity at DCPL. (continued)</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
Key Outcome Target 1.2. Increase the number of successful grant applications by two each year of the plan.		X		
Key Outcome Target 1.3. Meet LSTA and all other grant monitoring deadlines 100% of the time.			X	
Key Outcome Target 1.4. By 2007, three sub-grants will be awarded.				X

<b>GOAL 2: Narrow the digital divide for the residents of the District of Columbia by providing increased access to technology, training, and information resources.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
Key Output Target 2.1. The total number of public computers in public libraries in the District of Columbia will be increased from 220 to 350 by June 2007.		X		
Key Output Target 2.2. By 2007, a technology refresh program will be developed and implemented.		X		
Key Output Target 2.3. Each year, DCPL will increase the number of library technology training opportunities for patrons by 5%.		X		
Key Output Target 2.4. By January 2003, implement the iBistro component of the SIRSI integrated online library system that provides a full range of e-library functionality.	X			
Key Outcome Target 2.1. By 2007, the use of public computers will increase by 15%.			X	
Key Outcome Target 2.2. By June 2005, 75% of the public computers in DCPL will meet the current recognized standards for both hardware and software.		X		
Key Outcome Target 2.3. Each year, the number of residents participating in technology training opportunities at public libraries in the District of Columbia will increase by 200.		X		
Key Outcome Target 2.4. Hits on the DCPL web catalog will increase by 15% after the introduction of iBistro.	X			

<b>GOAL 3: Help to lower the illiteracy rate in the District of Columbia, by providing literacy and other educational programs, and serving as a clearinghouse for literacy services provided by other agencies and organizations throughout the city.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
Key Output Target 3.1. The number of adults participating in programs and activities to enhance and motivate life-long learning will increase by 5% each year.		X		
Key Output Target 3.2. DCPL will increase job readiness and pre-employment opportunities for Welfare to Work and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) participants by 10% by September 2007.	X			
Key Outcome Target 3.1. By September 2007, more than 15% of people participating in DCPL literacy programs will have improved literacy skills.			X	

<b>GOAL 4: Improve the reading readiness and reading skills of D.C. children and young adults by providing a variety of innovative and creative after school, early childhood, and family literacy programs, especially in areas with large concentrations of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
Key Output Target 4.1. At least 50% of neighborhood libraries in the District of Columbia will develop outreach programs to provide service to charter schools and home schoolers in their neighborhood.		X		
Key Output Target 4.2. Each year of the plan at least 500 children will be visited in their childcare homes or centers by an outreach librarian providing programs, activities and deposit collections.				X
Key Output Target 4.3. By September 2007 at least 500 parents or caregivers of children ages 2-5 will participate in parent education workshops developing skills to encourage their child's school readiness as their first teacher.		X		
Key Output Target 4.4. In partnership with four area hospital centers, the library will provide gift books and emergent literacy information to at least 1,500 low-income mothers of newborns each year of the plan.		X		
Key Output Target 4.5. By 2005 a new strategic plan for the Young Adult Services program at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library will be implemented.	X			

<b>GOAL 4: Improve the reading readiness and reading skills of D.C. children and young adults by providing a variety of innovative and creative after school, early childhood, and family literacy programs, especially in areas with large concentrations of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients. (continued)</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
Key Output Target 4.6. Teen participation in library programs at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library will increase by 20% by September 2007.	X			
Key Output Target 4.7. School readiness for children whose parents or caregivers have participated in parent education workshops will improve.			X	
Key Output Target 4.8. The number of low-income parents who are recipients of gift books for their newborn children and who register as a DCPL customer will increase by 10% each year of the plan.		X		
Key Outcome Target 4.1. DCPL will provide programs to school age children (grades 1-8) to enhance and motivate a life-long reading habit.				X
Key Outcome Target 4.2. DCPL will develop a new and re-vitalized young adult program to attract young adults to the library and to solicit their input in the design and operation of a teen center in renovated or newly constructed library facilities.		X		
Key Outcome Target 4.3. Continue and enhance the Reach Out and Read (ROAR) program and other Language and Reading Readiness (emergent literacy) services to children ages newborn through five.			X	
Key Outcome Target 4.4. Work closely with the Department of Human Services to develop, and provide family literacy programs in neighborhoods with a high percentage of TANF recipients.	X			
Key Outcome Target 4.5. Work closely with the D.C. Public Schools to provide leadership and professional expertise to the DCPS transformational schools library media centers to facilitate collection development and the development of high quality library media programs as instructional support.	X			

<b>GOAL 5: Provide and improve library services for underserved residents of the District of Columbia, especially those with diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and disabilities.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
<b>Key Output Target 5.1. DCPL will add 1,200 items (print and non-print) in world languages each year for the next five years.</b>		X		
<b>Key Output Target 5.2. By July 2004, the DCPL website and key library system documents will be available in three languages, other than English, that are used by DCPL customers.</b>		X		
<b>Key Output Target 5.3. DCPL will develop an updated model for the provision of library services to seniors and their caregivers in the District of Columbia by September 2004.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 5.4. DCPL will continue to develop a series of programs designed to increase public awareness of the deaf community and its needs in the District of Columbia.</b>			X	
<b>Key Output Target 5.5. The public libraries in the District of Columbia will acquire assistive technology to meet the needs of the differently able community in the District of Columbia to access fully all library services. To do so, DCPL will conduct a survey of users to determine their needs.</b>			X	
<b>Key Output Target 5.6. DCPL will work to implement the recommendations of the National Library Service to enhance the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.</b>			X	
<b>Key Outcome Target 5.1. The circulation of world language library materials will increase by 5% each year.</b>		X		
<b>Key Outcome Target 5.2. The number of web-generated customer comments in languages other than English will increase by 20%.</b>	X			
<b>Key Outcome Target 5.3. The number of senior citizens and caregivers who utilize services at the public libraries of the District of Columbia will increase by 5% each year.</b>	X			
<b>Key Outcome Target 5.4. Each year at least 1,000 people will participate in deaf awareness public programs or in programs designed to give deaf citizens full access to library and other community services.</b>		X		

<b>GOAL 5: Provide and improve library services for underserved residents of the District of Columbia, especially those with diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and disabilities. (continued)</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
Key Outcome Target 5.5. The use of assistive technology will increase by 10% by September 2006.				X
Key Outcome Target 5.6. By 2007 the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at DCPL will be in compliance with National Library Service Standards.		X		

<b>GOAL 6: Improve reference services by providing extensive training to reference staff on the effective use of the Internet to answer customer questions at the library and remotely.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
Key Output Target 6.1. By January 2003, five reference librarians will be trained on the use of Internet resources to meet reference needs. These librarians will then train their colleagues.				X
Key Output Target 6.2. By September 2007, 95% of all reference librarians will have been trained on the use of Internet resources to meet reference needs.			X	
Key Output Targets 6.3. Usage statistics for electronic resources will be monitored and reviewed quarterly.		X		
Key Outcome Target 6.1. The percentage of virtual reference transactions to total reference transactions will increase by at least 10% per year.	X			
Key Outcome Target 6.2. The success rate for reference transactions at public libraries in the District of Columbia will increase by 5% as measured by a reference satisfaction survey instrument.	X			
Key Outcome Target 6.3. Usage statistics for electronic databases will increase by 20% each year.		X		



<b>GOAL 7: Preservation of local history resources and improved access to their use.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
<b>Key Output Target 7.1. By October 2004, increase the number of Finding Aids mounted on the website by 50% including an electronic version of the guide to oral histories.</b>				X
<b>Key Output Target 7.2. By October 2003, the Oral History Research Center at the Washingtoniana Division will be reestablished.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 7.3. By October 2004, DCPL will collaborate with other repositories to identify oral histories documenting Washington, D.C. history held by at least three local institutions other than DCPL.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 7.4. By October 2004, DCPL will develop a webpage of online information and tools to encourage oral history projects.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 7.5. By September 2007, four collections will be processed and added to the D.C. Community Archives.</b>				X
<b>Key Outcome Target 7.1. By October 2003, a baseline for the number of website hits on our web-mounted Finding Aids will be established.</b>	X			
<b>Key Outcome Target 7.2. By 2005, there will be a 5% increase in hits on the Finding Aids mounted on our website.</b>	X			
<b>Key Outcome Target 7.3. By October 2005, we will have a baseline for the number of website hits on our Oral History Research Center help page.</b>	X			

<b>GOAL 8: Increase access to government documents both in print and non-print formats at DCPL.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
<b>Key Output Target 8.1. By June 2005, government documents will be consolidated.</b>			X	
<b>Key Output Target 8.2. By July 2003, a dedicated computer workstation will be available to customers to access electronic government documents.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 8.3. By October 2004, at least 75% of all government documents will be cataloged and the records will be available through the DCPL web-based catalog.</b>			X	
<b>Key Output Target 8.4. By September 2004, 50% of DCPL reference staff will be trained to E-competencies for Federal Depository Librarians.</b>			X	
<b>Key Outcome Target 8.1. By June 2005, customers will be successful in locating print format government documents 80% of the time.</b>		X		
<b>Key Outcome Target 8.2. By January 2003, customers will be able to view and print electronic government documents from a dedicated workstation in the consolidated government documents unit.</b>		X		
<b>Key Outcome Target 8.3. Customers will be able to locate 80% of all government documents, both print and non-print, through the DCPL web-based catalog.</b>			X	
<b>Key Outcome Target 8.4. By September 2006, 75% of reference librarians will meet the E-competencies for Federal Depository Librarians as defined by the Government Documents Round Table (GODORT) of the American Library Association (ALA).</b>		X		
<b>Key Outcome Target 8.5. By September 2007, DCPL will be in full compliance with the Government Printing Office <u>Instructions to Depository Libraries</u>.</b>		X		

<b>GOAL 9: Develop a strategic plan for the Black Studies Division of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library with special emphasis on the use of technology.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
<b>Key Output Target 9.1. By June 2003, three other Black studies collections in urban public libraries will be studied to identify best practices.</b>			X	
<b>Key Output Target 9.2. By October 2003, a strategic plan will be developed for the Black Studies Division of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library, which includes detailed plans for the use of technology in the preservation of Black Studies resources, and to disseminate information about the resources.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 9.3. By January 2004, the Black Studies Division of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library will debut a new web page highlighting its programs, services, and collections.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 9.4. By July 2003, DCPL will host a seminar with participants from Black historical and cultural organizations in the Washington metropolitan area to discuss collaborative efforts, especially in the area of electronic access and public awareness.</b>	X			
<b>Key Outcome Target 9.1. By September 2006, visitors to the Black Studies Division of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library (both in person and virtual) will have increased by 30%.</b>	X			
<b>Key Outcome Target 9.2. By June 2004, 70% of the action items identified in the strategic plan will have been implemented.</b>	X			
<b>Key Outcome Target 9.3. Participants in a seminar sponsored by DCPL will collaborate on a project to preserve local African-American history resources.</b>	X			

<b>GOAL 10: Develop and implement a marketing plan to establish the framework for a strategic approach to marketing, promoting and advertising public library services to targeted communities in the District of Columbia.</b>	<b>No Progress</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Met Goal</b>	<b>Surpassed Goal</b>
<b>Key Output Target 10.1. By October 2005, media exposure for programs and services of the public libraries in the District of Columbia will increase by 10%.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 10.2. 20% increase in number of persons who say they learned about public library programming in the District of Columbia through a targeted marketing campaign.</b>	X			
<b>Key Output Target 10.3. Develop a database of media outlets, both print and electronic, for targeting population specific news releases.</b>		X		
<b>NOTE: No Outcome Targets were provided in the Plan under Goal 10.</b>				

### **General Assessment of Progress by Goal Area**

#### **GOAL 1: Increase and improve granting activity at DCPL.**

The most tangible result under this goal is the hiring of a full-time DCPL Grants Manager. Of greatest significance to the LSTA program is that the Grants Manager also serves as the LSTA Coordinator.

The Grants Manager has worked closely with IMLS in rectifying deficiencies that existed prior to her arrival and pressed forward with efforts to broaden the scope of the District's LSTA program to include libraries of all types. The relatively recent creation of an LSTA Advisory Council and the establishment of a subgrant program are both positive signs that the DCPL's LSTA program is on its way to improvement. Furthermore, the coordination of all grants programs under a single person should also result in opportunities to pursue targeted funding to continue programs begun with LSTA funds.

Three subgrants were awarded and are in progress. These projects will be reflected in the FY 2006 State Program Report. A new grant cycle is now under way and the award of a second round of grants is anticipated in the near future. With the second round of awards, DCPL will have exceeded its objective of awarding three subgrants by 2007.

**Taken as a whole, DCPL has achieved Goal 1.**

**GOAL 2:** *Narrow the digital divide for the residents of the District of Columbia by providing increased access to technology, training, and information resources.*

No LSTA funds were expended to specifically further this goal in the FY 2003 – FY 2005 timeframe. Because the Board of Library Trustees decided that DCPL would not comply with the requirements of the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA), it is not eligible to expend LSTA funds in specific technology-related categories. Specifically, DCPL cannot use Federal grant money to purchase computers or other technology hardware that might be connected to the Internet and may not use Federal grant money to cover the costs of connecting to the Internet. In regard to customer training in technology, DCPL offers a program of free classes in computer use to the public. During the FY 2003 – FY 2006 period, class records show that registration numbered 1,584. Most of the progress that has been made in this goal area is due to either local funding or funds acquired through foundations, including the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

While DCPL has made some progress toward narrowing the digital divide, it is still well behind exemplary public libraries serving populations of comparable size in providing public access to the Internet, productivity software and tools, and electronic resources. Public libraries in cities such as Charlotte (NC), Seattle (WA), and Portland (OR) are far more advanced in addressing the digital divide issue. If DCPL continues to depend on “soft-money” sources such as grants and LSTA to build and maintain the basic information technology infrastructure, many District residents will continue to have substandard access to electronic resources.

**Some progress has been made toward meeting Goal 2; however, much more remains to be done.**

**GOAL 3:** *Help to lower the illiteracy rate in the District of Columbia by providing literacy and other educational programs, and by serving as a clearinghouse for literacy services provided by other agencies and organizations throughout the city.*

The amount of LSTA funding expended on a single program that is designed to address this goal exceeds the amounts directed toward any other individual program. In the FY 2003 – FY 2005 period, 32.72% of DCPL’s LSTA allotment was spent in support of its Adult Literacy Resource Center (ALRC). The program attempts to act as a clearinghouse for adult literacy activities in the District. The Center provides information and referral services related to adult literacy and acts as a General Education Diploma (GED) practice site. In its role as a clearinghouse for information about adult literacy programs, the head of ALRC has been a leader in DC LEARNS, the District of Columbia’s literacy coalition that recruits volunteers, provides outreach to new learners and materials, research, training, and technical assistance to direct providers of literacy tutoring. ALRC also participates on the Mayor’s Literacy Council and holds volunteer fairs that are well attended at DCPL.

DCPL is meeting the short-term goal of helping to reduce illiteracy. The evaluators believe that outcome-based evaluation could be applied to this program in such a way that ALRC could refine its own service offerings and work with other agencies to increase the efficacy of their programs. ***Stronger partnerships with organizations providing a variety of literacy-related services to end-users would also serve to maximize the LSTA dollars invested in the program.***

**Overall, DCPL is making progress toward meeting Goal 3.**

***GOAL 4: Improve the reading readiness and reading skills of D.C. children and young adults by providing a variety of innovative and creative after school, early childhood, and family literacy programs, especially in areas with large concentrations of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.***

Several different LSTA-funded programs for children and youth fall under this Goal. The Reach Out and Read (ROAR) program has received the largest share of LSTA funds expended under this goal since FY 2003. ROAR is an innovative program that serves preschoolers on-site in licensed home-based daycare centers. The evaluators had an opportunity to conduct a focus group with a small group of daycare providers. The program received high marks on several counts. The providers were delighted with the programs that were offered but also thought that the program left them better prepared to help the children under their care in their preparation for entering school. The daycare providers also indicated that some parents use the worksheets provided through the ROAR program at home. One focus group participant said, "You sure can tell which parents are using those materials."

The Summer Quest program encourages children from pre-Kindergarten through grade 8 to read during the summer months. Over 17,000 children participated in the program throughout the District during the summer of 2006. The final program that is included under this goal is aimed at young adults ages 12–18. "Holla' Back" had more than 2,400 participants in 2005.

Together, these three programs offer reading programs for children and youth ranging from the very young through adolescence. A relatively small portion of the cost of these programs comes from LSTA. Funding from the D.C. Public Library Foundation and partnerships with organizations such as Reading is Fundamental enables the Library to accomplish more than it would be able to do with LSTA dollars alone.

While external partnership related to these programs appears strong, there appears to be little or no connection between these services for children and youth and DCPL's own Adult Literacy Resource Center. Although this is not an uncommon separation in public library systems, closer alignment, especially in efforts related to family literacy, seems sensible.

Goal 4, like Goal 3, will never be fully met. However, ROAR, Summer Quest, and Holla' Back are important programs that are addressing reading readiness and the general reading skills of the District's children.

**Overall, DCPL is making progress toward meeting Goal 4.**

***GOAL 5: Provide and improve library services for underserved residents of the District of Columbia, especially those with diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, and disabilities.***

Like many other state library administrative agencies, DCPL uses a portion of its LSTA funding to support National Library Service (NLS)/Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH) activities. The Adaptive Services Division of the D.C. Public Library serves as the District's NLS affiliate. Adaptive Services received grants of \$92,116, \$94,400 and \$84,523 in FY 2003, 2004, and 2005 respectively.

As the name of the program/division indicates, Adaptive Services is not limited to traditional LBPH activities. In fact the program has been quite active in its efforts to serve the deaf community and to champion the availability of adaptive technologies.

The Adaptive Services Division has a new Head who brings with her experience from another state library agency that has an exemplary outreach program. The evaluators believe that this program has good potential. However, recognizing its full potential will require careful planning and perhaps a reorganization of functions that are currently included under the Adaptive Services umbrella.

Goal 5 also encompasses efforts to enhance the world languages resources of DCPL. Several grants have been awarded to build collections (both print and non-print) in a number of different languages both at the Martin Luther King, Jr. central library and in some of DCPL's branches. The evaluators visited one of the branches (Mt. Pleasant) and discussed the impact of these collections with the branch manager and with a bi-lingual staff member. LSTA funding provided \$3,000 worth of new Spanish language materials at the branch in the past year. Materials have been purchased for both adults and children. Many of the titles are very practical in nature, such as dictionaries, books on general math, ESL materials, and items on topics related to immigration. While the funds are well used and are obviously helpful in a neighborhood with a Hispanic/Latino population of approximately 28%, far more resources are needed. The neighborhood around the library is also home to many Ethiopian, Somali, and Vietnamese individuals and the branch library lacks adequate resources to meet the library and information needs of these groups.

While DCPL is making a valiant effort to serve its diverse community, much remains to be done. One area that seems to be lacking is access to electronic resources in languages other than English. Although the library's web-based catalog is available in Spanish and in French, very little else is available on the DCPL website in languages other than English.

**DCPL has made some progress toward meeting Goal 5; however, much more remains to be done.**

**GOAL 6:** *Improve reference services by providing extensive training to reference staff on the effective use of the Internet to answer customer questions at the library and remotely.*

Little or no LSTA funding was used to address the needs related to Goal 6 that were identified in the 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan.

While some of the objectives outlined for Goal 6 were realized, there has been little progress in increasing DCPL's capacity to deliver information content through its website, and although the DCPL library staff is certainly more capable of using web-based resources than they were in 2002 when the Plan was written, public access to electronic resources and information content through the Library's website is still far from adequate.

It is pertinent to note that very little LSTA money has been used by DCPL for purposes related to staff development. Training library staff, both professionals and support staff, is a major emphasis in the LSTA program offered in many states.

**Overall, DCPL's progress in meeting Goal 6 has been minimal.**

**GOAL 7:** *Preservation of local history resources and improved access to their use.*

The District of Columbia Public Library's Washingtoniana collection is an incredible resource. Unfortunately, it is housed in a substandard physical environment and very little of its content is available electronically.

LSTA dollars have supported some of the activities of the Washingtoniana Division on an ongoing basis. This Division is second only to the Adult Literacy Resource Center in the amount of LSTA funding allocated to it since FY 2003. In recent years, LSTA funds have been used primarily to support the work of an archivist and a photo-archivist. While the staff in this Division is extremely dedicated and talented, directing all of the District's LSTA allocation to support the Washingtoniana collection would likely do little more than scratch the surface of the Division's overall needs.



Directing LSTA funds toward this program is clearly warranted. In the future, however, developing strategies that would enable the Division to use LSTA funds to leverage other sources of funding seems essential. Major grants will be required for preservation of resources, for digitization, and for the development of additional electronic access tools.

**DCPL's LSTA program is advancing the cause of preserving local history resources and making them more accessible; nevertheless, progress toward meeting Goal 7 is inadequate given the enormous task at hand.**

***GOAL 8: Increase access to government documents both in print and non-print formats at DCPL.***

A relatively small amount of LSTA funding has been used to support Goal 8. Nevertheless, DCPL has been able to meet several of its objectives related to access to government documents and it is making progress toward meeting several others.

The principal accomplishment to date has been adding most of the Federal documents in DCPL's collection to the Library's online catalog. That being said, the world of government documents is changing rapidly and access to print-on-paper collections is becoming less and less important as the web becomes the primary source of this type of content. Ensuring that residents of the District have easy and convenient access to content regardless of format will remain a challenge.

Two points raised earlier in the evaluation seem pertinent. The first is that DCPL has an inadequate information technology infrastructure (too few computers, lack of ongoing funds for regular upgrades, insufficient staff for timely maintenance and repair, etc.) and the second is that DCPL's web presence is currently less than robust.

**DCPL has made progress toward meeting the objectives outlined under Goal 8 in the 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan; however, new realities in how government documents are accessed suggest that this goal will need to be revisited in the 2008 – 2012 Plan.**

**GOAL 9:** *Develop a strategic plan for the Black Studies Division of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Library with special emphasis on the use of technology.*

Less than \$3,000 in LSTA funding was directed toward this goal in the FY 2003 – FY 2005 timeframe. Most of this minimal funding was used to license databases consistent with the Black Studies Division’s mission.

There was an attempt to examine how Black Studies resources are handled in other major urban libraries in the United States. However, the strategic planning effort envisioned in the 2003 – 2007 LSTA plan was never accomplished. The Black Studies Division’s web presence remains rudimentary and consists primarily of descriptions of the resources available at DCPL. A single page of links to other websites of interest is offered; however, it too has been neglected. The evaluators discovered that one-quarter of the links offered were no longer valid.

The DCPL Black Studies Division seems to lack focus. The evaluators understand that the new DCPL administration is currently examining the Library’s divisional structure and that a new, more coherent approach to all of DCPL’s special collections may be on the horizon.

**Very little progress has been made toward achieving Goal 9.**

**GOAL 10:** *Develop and implement a marketing plan to establish the framework for a strategic approach to marketing, promoting and advertising public library services to targeted communities in the District of Columbia.*

An amount of \$22,339 was expended in FY 2003 to further this goal. Most of these funds were used to increase public awareness of specific programs rather than to, as the goal suggests, “establish the framework for a strategic approach to marketing.”

However, Federal law prohibits the use of Federal grant money to promote the recipient agency in a general way. In essence, this goal was faulty. Once that was discovered at IMLS, which occurred in the year in which the FY 2005 LSTA allocation was being spent at DCPL, no LSTA money was expended to promote the agency per se.

**Little or no progress was made toward the achievement of Goal 10; however, Goal 10 itself should have been written to make clear that the marketing paid for with LSTA funds was “allowable” by Federal law if, in fact, that was to be the case.**

## **Closing Comments on the General Assessment of Progress by Goal Area**

There is a recurrent theme to one of the major shortcomings of DCPL's LSTA program. While specific percentage targets were cited for several programs that received LSTA funds, the evaluators were unable to determine whether any baseline for comparison was ever established and whether subsequent measurement of progress was gauged in any way.

After a review of progress toward meeting the goals outlined in DCPL's 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan, the extent to which LSTA has been handled as an "internal" program should be evident. In fact, several of the Goals in the plan are specific to individual District of Columbia Public Library divisions. While the District of Columbia Public Library is likely to remain the centerpiece of the District's LSTA program, the involvement of other types of libraries appears to have been sadly lacking in the past. However, recent developments and actions seem to signal a new positive direction for the LSTA program. The establishment of an LSTA Advisory Council is a first step in opening the program to broader participation. The awarding of three small subgrants is a second substantive step.

The District of Columbia's LSTA program will be greatly enhanced through the involvement of a broader cross-section of the D.C. library community in planning for the LSTA program. DCPL has the opportunity to move the District's LSTA program forward significantly by approaching the 2008 – 2012 LSTA Plan in an inclusive way.

### III. A Closer Look - Results of In-depth Evaluation

The D.C. Public Library has done many good things with the LSTA funds that have been allocated to the District. However, much of the emphasis has been on the “things” purchased or the “things” done as opposed to a focus on results. Furthermore, it appears that there has been very little involvement of either end-users or other libraries in determining priorities for the program.

That being said, many of the existing programs that have received LSTA support are consistent with the LSTA purposes and have great potential. We will highlight one program to illustrate what we mean.

The Reach Out and Read (ROAR) program has received LSTA support in each of the three fiscal years covered by this evaluation. ROAR is an emergent literacy program for preschool children. The program takes services into home-based, licensed daycare facilities. The outreach librarian assigned to this program conducts activities that model book sharing techniques and principles of early literacy that promote language and vocabulary development.

The program appears to have positive effects on several levels. The children are exposed to reading in a positive, controlled environment. The daycare providers gain a better understanding of how they can promote literacy and language development. Parents derive benefits both through their children and through access to activity sheets that enable and encourage them to continue positive literacy reinforcement activities in their homes.

LSTA funds that have been allocated to this program are as follows:

- FY 2003            \$27,393
- FY 2004            \$50,817
- FY 2005            \$64,115

The majority of the LSTA support has been used to pay the salary and benefits for the outreach librarian who provides the direct services.

The ROAR program is closely aligned with four of the LSTA purposes. They are:

- An expansion of services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages
- The development of public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations
- The targeting of 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

- The targeting of library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line.

The ROAR program is based on sound educational principles and is well organized. Given limited staff, ROAR reaches a large number of children (nearly 3,000 direct contacts with children during FY 2005). The program connects the children and child care providers with their nearest branch library and offers a training component as well. It is easy to characterize the program as an outstanding success. ROAR is an important service that has had a positive impact on many children who live in the poorest neighborhoods in the District.

However, the ROAR program also represents some lost opportunities. The nature of the service lends itself to outcome-based evaluation. Stronger partnerships could be forged with schools and institutions of higher learning both to extend the reach of the program and to glean more information on the efficacy of the techniques that are used. There might be interest in linking the ROAR program with other literacy efforts of the D.C. Public Library including the Adult Literacy Resource Center.

At present, most of the evaluation of the program consists of counting contacts. Statistics are collected on the number of home daycares visited, the number of visits per site, the number of children served during each visit, the quantity of items included in deposit collections, and the number of training and promotional contacts. While the scope of these statistics is limited, it should be noted that they are more complete than the data that is available about most of the other LSTA-funded programs of DCPL. Nevertheless, DCPL could be building its case for the expansion of the ROAR project (with funding from other sources) if it were able to document the degree to which children involved in the program are more successful after they enter school. This would obviously require a closer working relationship than exists now with the D.C. Public Schools and potentially with institutions of higher learning to design and implement an assessment process. It would also cost money.

Closer contact with institutions of higher learning might also enhance DCPL's ability to reach more children. The involvement of early childhood education student interns in the program could provide a positive benefit for all concerned.

The ROAR program could also be used as a training venue for youth services staff within the D.C. Public Library. Branch level staff could develop a greater knowledge and skill of emergent literacy concepts through first-hand participation in the ROAR program.

In short, the ROAR program's narrow focus on service delivery ironically has limited the extent to which the program can have a wide-reaching, lasting impact on literacy in the District of Columbia. If DCPL decides to continue providing LSTA support for the ROAR program, it should make a concerted effort to develop a stronger evaluation component, to expand the scope of the partnerships that are involved in the program, and to strengthen the degree to which the program is used to educate library staff and early childhood education students.

## **IV. Progress in Showing Results of Library Initiatives or Services (Outcome-Based Evaluation)**

The District of Columbia made little progress toward implementing outcome-based evaluation (OBE) during the FY 2003 – FY 2005 timeframe. Although two programs were identified as being OBE-related in the FY 2004 State Program Report, a closer examination reveals that the measures applied to the two programs identified were really not much more than rudimentary output measures.

Evaluation of the Summer Quest reading program amounted to counting the number of children participating in the program by grade groupings, tracking the number of books read by each group, and asking the children to share information about the story line and or characters in the books as they filled in their reading logs. Evaluation of the Holla' Back program for teens involved determining how many of the young adult participants had read two books, four books, six books or eight or more books as a result of the program. While the data collected may be useful and, while collecting it does create a baseline for future summer programs, it hardly qualifies as outcome-based evaluation.

No programs were designated as being OBE-related in the FY 2005 State Program Report. Three DCPL staff members did attend the IMLS two-day workshop on OBE in 2006 and an attempt may be made to apply OBE principles to at least one program in the current fiscal year. DCPL also intends to integrate OBE into its 2008 – 2012 LSTA Plan.

It is noted later in this report (in the “Lessons Learned” section) that several ongoing programs seem to be very good candidates for OBE. However, DCPL has much work to do in the area of evaluation. In general, the evaluators found a dearth of even basic quantitative measures throughout the LSTA program. While there were a few exceptions to this generality, even the programs that did maintain basic statistics appeared not to be using this data in any substantive way to inform decision making or as an indicator of the need for change or adjustment of their program or service.

DCPL needs to make the improvement of evaluation one of its priorities for its LSTA program. An effort needs to be made to impart the importance of evaluation both as an accountability mechanism and as a way to improve services. Evaluation needs to become an integral part of all of the LSTA programs carried out under DCPL's auspices regardless of whether they are internal programs or projects that are awarded subgrants.

## V. Lessons Learned

### Introduction

There are many lessons to be learned from the evaluation of the District of Columbia Public Library's implementation of the Library Services and Technology Act. The evaluators believe that these lessons fall into three major categories. The first is related to resource allocation and the second involves outcome-based evaluation. The third lesson has to do with lost opportunities to maximize the impact of LSTA funding. The lessons learned in these three areas will provide a good basis for the development of the 2008 – 2012 Five-Year LSTA Plan.

### Resource Allocation

The District of Columbia Public Library Five-Year (2003 – 2007) LSTA Plan, while relatively well organized, was quite unrealistic from a resource allocation standpoint. The plan failed to identify how **LSTA** funds would be used to further goals and objectives (output and outcome targets) that clearly required funds from other sources as well. This failure to consider required resources frequently resulted in a failure to reach the stated goals and objectives. The Plan's objectives were very simply larger than the available funding.

This situation was exacerbated by the fact that much of DCPL's LSTA funding has traditionally been used for personnel costs. For example, more than fifty-two percent (52.66%) of D.C.'s FY 2005 allotment was devoted to staffing costs. Furthermore, most of the positions included in this total are ongoing, that is, the positions have been funded with LSTA dollars for many years. While the evaluators found nothing to indicate that the work performed by the people in these positions was ineligible for LSTA support or that the work performed was substandard, the heavy reliance on LSTA for continuing programs limits the new or innovative work that can be accomplished.

It is hard to criticize DCPL's plan for reaching too far. In fact, LSTA is clearly designed to encourage state library agencies to expand their horizons and to extend their reach. Nevertheless, the reality of the situation is that much that was in the 2003 – 2007 plan was doomed to failure before it began because resources weren't available to fulfill the vision.

Two lessons grow out of this experience. First, the 2008 – 2012 LSTA Plan should carefully consider how LSTA dollars might be used in concert with other funds to accomplish great things. The strategy of using LSTA as a catalyst to leverage other funding sources or for planning purposes rather than direct service delivery has been employed successfully by many other states. The second lesson is that a strategy that would gradually reduce DCPL's dependency on LSTA funds to support ongoing programs will result in greater availability of funds for innovation.



## **Outcome-Based Evaluation (OBE)**

It is abundantly clear that the framers of the 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan had little or no understanding of outcome-based evaluation. A good number of the programs and services that were included in the Plan and have been carried out over the last three years lend themselves to an outcome-based approach. For example, both the work of the Adult Literacy Resource Center (ALRC) and the work conducted as part of the Reach Out and Read (ROAR) program lend themselves to tracking the progress of participants. In fact, the ALRC actually does some monitoring of its students and their progress. In spite of this fact, the goal in the 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan that includes the ALRC (Goal 3) has the fewest key output targets (2) and has only one weak key outcome target.

Working to design an outcome-based evaluation mechanism for this program would be useful on many different levels. First, outcome-based data could be used to make a good program even better. Second, it would build ongoing (non-Federal) support for the program. People are willing to support programs that get results and the evaluators have no doubt from the anecdotal evidence that has been collected that ALRC is accomplishing good and important things.

The evaluators also believe that the ROAR program is an excellent candidate for outcome-based evaluation. We are aware of an LSTA-funded project in Maryland (Carroll County Public Library) in which the progress of both an experimental group and a control group of children was monitored. Parents and the schools cooperated to make pre- and post- test scores available in order to document the effect of the Library's emergent literacy efforts. We believe that a similar effort could strengthen the ROAR program.

The D.C. Public Library has indicated in its reports to IMLS that it intends to work hard to incorporate outcome-based assessment. Several DCPL staff members have completed OBE training offered by IMLS. The evaluators believe that it would be possible for DCPL to inject some OBE evaluation into at least the two existing programs identified above in the current year. Certainly, OBE needs to be integrated to a greater extent in the 2008 – 2012 LSTA Plan.

## **Lost Opportunities to Maximize the Impact of LSTA**

Earlier in the "Lessons Learned" section, the evaluators talked about using LSTA funds as a catalyst to leverage other funding sources and about using LSTA for innovation. Libraries have very few sources of what might be considered "research and development" money. The Library Services and Technology Act provides libraries with an opportunity to try new things and determine what works and what doesn't. By devoting a large percentage of its LSTA allocation to ongoing programs and staffing, the DCPL is limiting the availability of "venture capital."

This LSTA evaluation also points out another lost opportunity. It is the partnership opportunity. The fact that the 1996 LSTA purposes rather than the current (2003) LSTA purposes were used to frame the 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan meant that the phrase “Developing public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations...” was not included in the plan. IMLS places a great emphasis on partnerships both in its state-based programs and in its “National Leadership” competitive grants program.

The word “partnership” was used only once in the 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan’s goals and objectives. Nevertheless, the evaluators found evidence of partnership activity in a number of programs. Partnerships do exist with the D.C. Public Schools, with literacy organizations, and with a variety of social service and non-profit agencies in the District. The next LSTA Plan needs to look at these and other potential partnerships in a new and different way to honor the prominent partnership concept in the LSTA program. However, omission of another kind of partnership is most glaring.

There is very little evidence of partnerships between and among *libraries* in the DCPL’s implementation of the LSTA program. The evaluators are pleased to report that this seems to be changing. The formation of the D.C. LSTA Advisory Council was the first step in this direction. The advisory group is multitype by design. The second sign of change is the fact that three subgrants were awarded in FY 2006. All were given to school libraries and one of the projects is a collaboration between the Capital City Public Charter School and the Mt. Pleasant Branch Library (and Friends of the Mt. Pleasant Branch). While the grant is small, the fact that it was awarded at all is a tangible indication that a spirit of reaching out is growing.

## **VI. Brief Description of Evaluation Process**

### **Description of the Evaluation Process**

The District of Columbia Public Library contracted with Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants to conduct the LSTA evaluation. The firm was selected as the result of a competitive “Request for Quotation” process that took place in June of 2006. Himmel & Wilson submitted a proposal that included a process that involved a review of background documentation, personal interviews, focus groups with end-users, and a meeting with the D.C. LSTA Advisory Council. The evaluation began in earnest in July of 2006 and continued through early March 2007.

### **Responsibilities of the Evaluation Team Members**

The evaluation process was carried out by Himmel & Wilson’s partners, Dr. Ethel E. Himmel and Mr. William J. “Bill” Wilson. Mr. Wilson acted as principal consultant for the assessment project and made four separate visits to the District of Columbia for a total of 7.5 days on site as part of the evaluation process. Dr. Himmel spent a single day on site.

Both Himmel & Wilson partners reviewed the existing plan and the background documentation supplied by the DCPL. This included items such as State Program Reports filed with IMLS, internal budgetary documents and descriptive and promotional materials regarding various LSTA-funded programs. Mr. Wilson met with and/or interviewed more than a dozen key DCPL staff. Included were Ginnie Cooper, DCPL’s new Chief Librarian; Bridget Bradley, DCPL Executive Officer; Lucy Labson, DCPL Grants Manager; and more than a dozen other staff members with responsibilities related to LSTA-funded programs and services. Mr. Wilson also met with the new D.C. LSTA Advisory Council at one of their regular monthly meetings. Both Dr. Himmel and Mr. Wilson were involved in drafting the evaluation report.

### **Estimated Evaluation Costs**

The District of Columbia Public Library contracted with Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants to conduct its LSTA evaluation and to assist the Library, acting in its role as a state library administrative agency, in the development of its 2008 – 2012 Plan. Total contract costs for both the evaluation and facilitation of the Plan are \$46,000. Of this amount, approximately \$22,000 was expended in contract services for the evaluation. In addition to this expense, the DCPL Grants Manager, acting in her role as the LSTA Coordinator, expended approximately 100 hours on the project. DCPL administrators, the staff responsible for various programs and services funded under LSTA, and members of the LSTA Advisory Council also contributed individual totals of approximately 20 hours of their time to the evaluation effort.