



**DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES  
GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS**



## **DIVISION OF LIBRARIES, ARCHIVES AND MUSEUMS**

### **A Five Year Technology Plan for Public Libraries in the U.S. Virgin Islands 2013-2017**

**IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT (LSTA)**

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# **Library Services and Technology Act**

## **U.S. Virgin Islands Five-Year Plan 2013-2017**

### **Introduction**

Within this outlined document is the Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year State Plan for the U.S. Virgin Islands for implementation during the 2013-2017 period (October 1, 2013—September 30, 2017). The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program promotes access to information resources provided by all types of libraries and is administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

The IMLS Grants for States Program under which state library administrative agencies (SLAAs) receive LSTA allotments requires each State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA) to submit a five-year plan that identifies the State and Territory library needs and the goals and activities that will be utilized to address these needs.

The U.S. Virgin Islands library community consists of various types of libraries ( K-12 school libraries, academic libraries, law libraries, including a library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped), many of which collaborate and share resources to better serve their patrons, constituents, and residents.

In preparation for its Five-Year Plan for the years 2013 through 2017, the Virgin Islands Public Library System (VIPLS) has reviewed a variety of information resources to understand both the constraints that libraries face and the opportunities that libraries can leverage to better serve the residents of the Virgin Islands. These findings will inform the establishment of priorities for the use of (LSTA) funds allotted to the U.S. Virgin Islands.

VIPLS has used prior LSTA funds effectively to meet the needs of VIPLS in a manner consistent with LSTA priorities, to promote the development of library services at the local level, and to provide access to electronic resources and other significant collections.

The IMLS LSTA program was reauthorized at the federal level in 2010 and will remain in effect through 2016. Program objectives for 2013-2017 are set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 9141(a)(1-8).<sup>1</sup> Each

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix A.

goal in the following Virgin Islands LSTA Five-Year State Plan will address one or more of these objectives.

## **Territorial Library Agency - Background**

The United States Virgin Islands is located 1,100 miles from the North American continent between the Atlantic Ocean and the Caribbean Sea. The islands, a territory of the United States, are made up of four major landmasses surrounded by approximately one hundred smaller islands and tiny cays. The four major islands are St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and the fourth, Water Island, was turned over to the USVI from the Department of Interior in the year 2000. Located just a half mile off the south side of St. Thomas, Water Island is served by St. Thomas offices. The capitol of the USVI is Charlotte Amalie, the city located on St. Thomas. The islands' population is approximately 106,000 people of which almost 80% are of African heritage. Other groups represented include East Indian, Caucasian, Chinese, Arab and Hispanic. As such, the population is diverse.

Administration of the Library Services and Technology Act is the responsibility of the Territorial Library Agency. This agency, the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums (DLAM), is administered by the Executive Branch of the Government of the Virgin Islands through its Department of Planning and Natural Resources, and is the designated SLAA.

Territory-wide, no distinction is made between the local and state (territorial) levels. DLAM participates in the direct provision of public library service as well as in the administrative, centralized technical, online services and systems functions. DLAM is located in St. Thomas. In addition to the four major public libraries located throughout the three major Virgin Islands, DLAM also operates a bookmobile (a second will be operational in St. Thomas in the near future), a small kiosk library and a Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, all located on St. Croix. DLAM also oversees the Territorial Archives, special collections of Virgin Islands materials and a photo duplication/digitization lab, where local newspapers and other Virgin Islands government documents are microfilmed, digitized and duplications of old photographs are made.

## **Vision**

Free and open access to information for all residents of the United States Virgin Islands is essential .

DLAM's projected priorities as outlined in this report aim

- to improve the ability of libraries to provide public service to all; and
- to enhance and improve its library services through technological advances.

## **Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums to:

- provide service, information and other resources to the Government of the United States Virgin Islands;
- support the development of an informed citizenry by providing access to a world of ideas and information;
- identify, preserve and promote the historical, cultural and public records of the United States Virgin Islands; and
- provide support to all residents of the United States Virgin Islands in their pursuit of learning.

Information and resources are provided to the Government of the United States Virgin Islands and the residents of the U.S Virgin Islands through several means. Each year provides DLAM the opportunity to improve its facilities in order to effectively serve the needs of library patrons. With the advancement of technology and the ever present need to update library materials while steadily offering the new, there is always room for improvement in all areas pertaining to Virgin Islands public libraries.

## **Needs Assessment**

Of the approximately 111,000 persons living in the Virgin Islands, according to the Virgin Islands Department of Health, The Virgin Islands, consisting of St. Thomas, St. John, St. Croix and Water Island, have close to one-third of their population below the poverty level.

While the U.S. economy grew at a record pace in the 1990s, contributing to the lowest child poverty rate in over 20 years, (2005 Poverty Rate = 35% US Census = 35 of every 1000 people are at poverty level) the economic conditions for children and families in the U.S. Virgin Islands

continues to deteriorate. The percentage of children in families with incomes below the poverty line continues to increase.<sup>2</sup> .

The Virgin Islands has not established its literacy rate. Linkages can and have been made between the levels of education and the type of library service available to a community. Virgin Islands public libraries, under the current levels of funding and staffing continue to provide a minimal level of service only.

The people of the Territory, however, particularly the young adults and children are targeted populations by default because they make up approximately 1/3 of the population. They require a highly proactive public library system, one focused on the planning, organizing implementation of services to meet their needs in the immediate and long term. All persons in the Territory, no matter the social or economic status, are served by the same public library system.

LSTA funds are used to supplement the local government's appropriations and allocations to its public libraries. LSTA funds fuel the initiatives necessary to provide the people of the territory with a level of library service that meets their needs.

The following goals, listed in priority, illustrate how the FY 2013-2017 LSTA Five-Year State Plan for the U.S. Virgin Islands addresses each of LSTA required elements.

## **FY 2013-2017 Goals and Objectives**

### **Goal I: Expand on the scope of the Virgin Islands Automated Library System (VIALS) (Addresses LSTA goals 1, 2 and 7)**

Objective 1: Reconstitute and authenticate the VIALS subject authority listings.

Objective 2: Reestablish within Symphony the Community Information and Newspaper index capability.

Objective 3: Perform an inventory of all major collections in order to reconcile the holdings against the VIALS online catalog.

Objective 4: In collaboration with the Territorial Archives unit of DLAM, develop workable definitions of the elements of the current special collections of Caribbean holdings that will foster the development and promulgation of

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<sup>2</sup> Taken from KidsCount.

approved policies and best practices addressing custodial care, security, description, access, handling, collection development, storage location, preservation and conservation of those materials throughout VIPLS.

VIALS is the divisional library technological network. All library branches utilize the Sirsi-Dynix form of the MARC catalog and a Windows-based network maintained centrally at the territorial library's main offices in St. Thomas. The VIALS network provides Internet service, email, printing, desktop services and technical support to staff and public users. It is the backbone of DLAM and is heavily supported by LSTA. VIALS responsibilities include the purchase and upgrade of all divisional hardware and software titles.

DLAM is now entering the second year of its implementation of the core Integrated Library System (ILS) software (Sirsi-Dynix Symphony). The first year of use was one of familiarization, both for the librarian/managers as well as the front line circulation and cataloging technicians. With the operating staff now having achieved a satisfactory comfort level of its command structure and basic reporting formats, DLAM can now develop a plan to accomplish several long-standing housekeeping utilities to address outstanding deficiencies in the VIALS catalog and the holdings of DLAM's general and special collections.

The four major task areas that will optimize the functionality of the ALS are set forth as Objectives One through Four above.

In order to accomplish these objectives, these tasks will require external support in the form of specialized cataloging services and the purchase of Library of Congress Authority Files. Objective Two will require the acquisition of a modified Symphony module. Objectives Three and Four will require an augmented schedule of circulation and cataloging technician hours. The VIALS system administrator will request, allocate and manage the resources made available for application to the enhancement of the ALS.

**Timeline:** Years 1-5

**Evaluation:** Continued growth and strength of VIALS

**Goal II: Identify and establish quantitative and qualitative data gathering protocols, outcome measurement strategies and reporting criteria for monitoring, evaluating and improving public library services, programs and projects. (Addresses LSTA goals 7 and 8)**

Objective 1: Contract with a consultant to perform an assessment of library services and suggest best practices, specific techniques, professional standards and guidelines for data monitoring and recording.

Objective 2: Analyze performance metrics data routinely (at not less than annual intervals) and prepare reports and recommendations based on same for DLAM and for release to the Virgin Islands community.

Objective 3: Contract with an independent consultant to perform the IMLS LSTA Five-Year State Plan Evaluation for 2013-2017 and aggregate data for same.

Objective 4: Review IMLS LSTA Five-Year State Plan Evaluation for 2013-2017 prepared by the independent consultant.

With the recent changes and reporting enhancements for the Five-Year State Plan Evaluations, VIPLS realizes that it is imperative that these data be identified, monitored and reported on a routinized basis in order to properly disclose information needed to prepare the Five-Year Evaluation. VIPLS will seek an independent consultant to help identify critical benchmarks in the LSTA goals it proposes to undertake, and what and how to measure in the processes that exist and in those that must yet be designed and built. In addition, VIPLS will seek the consultant's advice on how best to gather qualitative input from community stakeholders, and how to ensure data validity and reliability.

At the conclusion of the LSTA grant period, the independent consultant will rely on the data reports, analyses, surveys and other data-gathering instruments developed, produced and maintained over the grant term for preparing the Five-Year Evaluation.

**Timeline:** Years 1-5

**Evaluation:** Regularized reporting cycles, establishment of data gathering parameters and responsibilities, and periodic and end-of-term evaluations.

**Goal III: Improve the connectivity and technology supporting VIALS by leveraging the impact of Virgin Islands Broadband Initiative in combination with the subsidized funding offered by the E-Rate program, thereby expanding and improving library services through greater use of technology, electronic resources and collaborations. (Addresses LSTA goals 4, 5, 6, and 7)**

Objective 1: Contract DLAM's E-Rate Program monitoring and report management to a specialized consultant.

By the conclusion of fiscal year 2014 the Virgin Islands will have completed the implementation of its NTIA-supported initiative to provide the option of high speed Internet access to every home, business and government office in the territory. While reasonable in cost by comparison to current rates, each entity will have to bear the costs of "last mile" service provided by its Internet Service Provider (ISP) of choice.



In addition to access to Internet service, which each library facility needs, DLAM also requires additional Internet services to optimize its wide area network (WAN) functionality and the services it provides to its users [e.g., Voice over IP telephone (VoIP) and Virtual Private Network capacity].

These telecommunication costs are readily supportable under the E-Rate program. However, the application and ongoing paperwork management process is singularly onerous and requires near full-time dedicated monitoring by a DLAM staff person. DLAM proposes that this specialized task be placed under contract to a specialized consultant. Other successful E-Rate applicant institutions in the Virgin Islands have found that the benefit yield from E-Rate funding compares very favorably with the requisite consultant cost. DLAM believes that this approach offers a long-term solution to managing the costs of Internet telecommunications. Achievement of this goal will yield improved telecommunications services, Internet access, internal connections, and basic network linkages.

**Timeline:** Years 2-5

**Evaluation:** Through Departmental and Division monitoring, evaluations, statistics and data collection, along with public surveys.

**Goal IV: Provide library services that enable lifelong learning for residents of the Virgin Islands by enhancing and expanding the Virgin Islands Collections (Addresses LSTA goals 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7)**

Objective 1: Strengthen the Virgin Islands and Caribbean-focused special research collections by reviving the now-dormant micrographics and digital imaging program of the primary newspaper serials published in the Territory.

The current local newspaper microfilm collection begins with the Royal Danish American Gazette (1770) and it ends with the St. Croix Avis and the Virgin Islands Daily News of December 2001. Currently on hand there are two 35mm planetary cameras (one with newspaper/book cradle), one high speed film processor with a 1,000 ft. loading box and water mixing/filtration valve assembly, one roll film duplicator, a complete film inspection station, including microscope, densitometer and ultrasonic splicing station, and a Mecal roll film digital scanner. However, the microfilming program was suspended as of 2002 due to a drastic loss of trained and proficient image processing technicians. The micrographic capture and digital conversion equipment have been mothballed since that time in anticipation of the eventual restart of the program.

Most historical research on Virgin Islands topics require access to the Virgin Islands dailies, either for basic thematic development or corroboration of details derived elsewhere. Due to the constant stress on materials by researchers physically handling original newspapers, the as-yet unmicrofilmed collection dating from 2002 forward is in serious preservation risk. Furthermore, wider access to these singularly local publications is impeded because there is no digital form available for electronic transmission.

This program goal will address the initial organization and camera preparation of the backlog of Virgin Islands newspapers awaiting conversion from 2002 onward. The scope of this project will be to organize, prepare and to define the total metrics of the conversion project. The project will develop and produce an accurate definition of the material, equipment and labor resources required to clear the backlog and to ensure the sustainability of an ongoing program that accomplishes the routine digital conversion in a timely fashion. The project management team is also charged with exploring options for creating an index or other online search tool that facilitates the effective use of and ease of access to the digitized collection.

DLAM currently possesses most of the basic equipment elements needed to restart the micrographic image capture program as mentioned above. The estimated project total for the two largest periodicals in question – the Virgin Islands Daily News and the St. Croix Avis – is two hundred forty (240) 35 mm rolls, containing a projected 108,000 images for capture and digital conversion.

A team of document preparation clerks and image capture technicians will be identified and designated under the project management of the Virgin Islands Automated Library System (VIALS) IT manager and coordinated in DLAM with the Territorial Archivist. Education and training needs will be identified and carried out. Resource, skill, personnel and asset management collaborations will be established and maintained throughout the term of the project with the Territorial Archives, as well as other departments and divisions knowledgeable in digitization techniques and best practices. A digital conversion project consultant will be retained to advise on project planning, capability assessments and performance measures. The consultant will issue a report assessing the project's needs and advice for mobilization, including recommendations for further training and education, open source patron access models, and equipment needs. The assessment report, in turn, will inform the development of a strategic plan by the project team, including a budget, for a sustainable newspaper preservation program for DLAM.

**Timeline:** Years 1-5

**Evaluation:** Through Departmental and Division monitoring, evaluations, statistics and data collection , along with public surveys.

**Goal V: Enhance awareness of DLAM library programs, services, needs and capabilities, and foster community participation and collaboration with the Virgin Islands Public Libraries (Addresses LSTA goals 1, 2 and 4)**

Objective 1: Establish Citizens’ Advisory Boards to advise DLAM, through its Territorial Director, on designated library problems or programs.

Objective 2: Maintain existing collaborative program relationships, activities and communications with the Library of Congress, IMLS, Office of the Governor, the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, the National Park Service, Rotary International, initiatives of the Office of the First Lady, International Reading Council, Bureau of Corrections, St. Croix Botanical Gardens, Territorial Friends of the Library and professional library associations, Virgin Islands-Puerto Rico Friendship Committee, Department of Labor, Caribbean Genealogy Library, St. Croix Landmarks Society, University of the Virgin Islands, the Department of Education and other local, national and international organizations. Participate in new partnerships and collaborative programs and activities to increase awareness of VIPLS.

In these difficult economic times, advocacy plays an ever-increasing role in garnering support for public libraries. The key to effective public library advocacy is engendering a sense of the public’s engagement in and ownership of the challenges and issues that face today’s libraries. More importantly, without direct participation by the community which it serves, the public library will never be an accurate reflection of its patrons’ needs and or capabilities.

Title 3, Chapter 2 of the Virgin Islands Code, empowers the Territorial Librarian “from time to time (to) appoint temporary citizens’ advisory boards, whose members shall serve without pay, to advise on particular library problems or programs.”<sup>3</sup> Establishing Citizens’ Advisory Boards to gain input and oversight on projects like the newspaper preservation and access program described in Goal III above will increase community participation and awareness of such projects and help to promote increased interest in the collections held by DLAM. These Citizen Advisors can effectively serve as goodwill ambassadors throughout the community, and in so doing cultivate other collaborative opportunities for the public libraries of the Virgin Islands to serve the needs of its community.

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<sup>3</sup> 3 VIC §28e.

Cultivating and maintaining relationships with community organizations, other government agencies and private entities will serve not only to expand communications and improve advocacy, but to increase awareness by library management and staff of specialized learning and information needs in the community which may not be adequately addressed by other programs.

**Timeline:** Years 1-5

**Evaluation:** Perform a territorial survey in Year 1 to determine a baseline of awareness of and satisfaction with public library programs and services in the Territory, including the perception of library user needs and wants. Establish measurable and performance-based outcomes for all library programs and initiatives and share this information with the community through press releases, public presentations, and periodic reports. Promulgate and collect evaluation forms for all library programs and specialized services, and share this information with the participants and wider community. Monitor and track trending data and commentary from same. Issue reports on activities and recommendations of each Citizen’s Advisory Board at least annually and share this information publicly.

## **Coordination Efforts (Programs and Activities)**

A lesson learned from the previous Five-Year State Plan is the value of partnerships. Between 2008 and 2012, VIPLS through DLAM collaborated closely with numerous other governmental agencies, and organizations Territory-wide. VIPLS regularly partnered with the Office of the Governor and with other Divisions within the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, the Virgin Islands Council on the Arts, the VI Humanities Council, Department of Education and Rotary International. The support and collaborations were invaluable in the planning and implementation of programs. When appropriate, DLAM worked with individual libraries to coordinate resources, programs, and activities for the benefit of library users Territory-wide.

## **Evaluation Plan and Monitoring Procedures**

DLAM will use a variety of methods to measure progress towards meeting each of the goals for 2013-2017 by: 1) utilizing multiple evaluation approaches; 2) drawing on both qualitative and quantitative methodologies; 3) employing multiple evaluative research methods including document review, observations, surveys, interviews, and focus groups; and 4) triangulating data, where possible, for more robust findings.

The focus of the 2008-2012 Plan included user-level data to ascertain perceptions, effectiveness, benefits, and quality of service from library programs. However, the most recent evaluator commented on the excessive amount of data collection and staff time required to gather the indicator data. As a result, the focus of the 2013-2017 Five-Year State Plan will attempt to balance the reporting at the local, territory-wide library level for a variety of means.

In order to properly evaluate the various programs and services supplemented by the LSTA grant, librarians will be surveyed. Patrons and the general public will be asked to complete surveys related to specific programs. These surveys will query impressions and effect of past programs while also soliciting suggestions or needs for future ones. The availability of local library and professional consultants will also be utilized in this process.

## **Stakeholder Involvement**

Though the organizational chart and makeup of DLAM calls for a Library Advisory Board, persons have not been appointed to this role since the 1980's. Instead the advisory role has been informally accomplished with interactions between DLAM and the various organizations comprised of librarians. These include the St. Croix Library Association, the St. Thomas/St. John Library Association and the Virgin Islands Library Association. These organizations bring together all persons working in the library field, whether it be in school, academic or public libraries, professionals or para-professionals. The services and programs offered at the public libraries impact all of these groups.

The shortage of librarians in the territory is critical. With the establishment of the University of the Virgin Islands/University of Pittsburgh Masters degree program for Virgin Islands residents, funded by an IMLS grant, an additional professional cohort is now available within the Virgin Islands. More than 20 participants graduated from the MLIS program and are available for employment by territorial libraries, including the public libraries, as job vacancies are posted.

While the professional library community input was garnered in selecting and prioritizing the LSTA goals, that community will regularly be updated on the progress or problems involved with seeing the plan to fruition. The DLAM website is also key in alerting the public and the various professional organizations about the programs offered at local public libraries.

The LSTA Five-Year State Plan Evaluation for 2008-2012 produced by an independent consultant for VIPLS/DLAM also served as an important resource for the LSTA Five-Year State Plan 2013-2017.

DLAM and its management team, which includes the LSTA Coordinator for the Virgin Islands, will ensure that the execution of the Five-Year State Plan is coordinated with the strategic planning, priorities, and collaborative plan of VIPL Territory-wide.

## **Communication and Public Availability**

After the 2013-2017 Five-Year State Plan has been submitted to and approved by IMLS, it will be published for dissemination to the library community through the Department of Planning and Natural Resources website and remain accessible online to the public throughout the period of the Five-Year State Plan.

DLAM management and staff responsible have been identified and responsibilities designated for implementing, continuously tracking, evaluating, and monitoring progress of the 2013-2017 Five-Year State Plan. DLAM management is also responsible for and tasked with the timely production and submission of progress and evaluation reports that coincide with the preparation of the annual State Program Report to IMLS.

This charge will include collecting required financial reports, final narrative reports for all LSTA projects and programs undertaken, and onsite monitoring for programs. The LSTA Coordinator and DLAM management will be responsible for assuring that all projects are completed in accordance with the Act and IMLS requirements, that the State Program Report is completed in a timely fashion, and that the Five-Year Evaluation is completed according to the provisions of LSTA.

## **Monitoring Procedures**

DLAM's Five-Year State Plan and procedures for using the LSTA funds is different to that of other states and areas. There are no sub-grantees in the VIPL LSTA model. DLAM receives and utilizes the granted funds to benefit the four public libraries operating in the territory. Financial reports are undertaken by the business arm of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources, the parent agency of DLAM. DLAM, particularly its IT Systems Office, will keep the Territorial Director of Libraries and the Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources informed on the goals outlined in the plan.

LSTA funds play an ever-increasing role in the ability of DLAM to serve its community. In the past, LSTA funds enabled DLAM to upgrade the libraries' network and upgrade the capability of

the library to digitize and provide easy access to the library's valuable collection of microfilm. Continued funding is essential to the accomplishment of DLAM technology goals for the Territory and to position DLAM to undertake more programmatic use of LSTA funds.

## **Assurances**

The required signed certifications and assurances are hereby submitted with the original plan to the Institute of Museum and Library Services, State Programs, 1800 M Street NW, 9th Floor, Washington, DC, 20036-5802.

## **Conclusion**

Territory-wide, due to financial constraints and changing circumstances, not all of the ambitious goals set out in VIPLS's Five Year Plan 2008-2012 were accomplished, but the most significant of those goals were successfully addressed. During this period, VIPL has established a firm foundation for future growth and development of quality library services throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Over the next funding period, VIPLS will continue to examine the information needs of Virgin Islanders and developments in library and information services with DLAM's oversight and guidance. The surrounding organizational environment will be analyzed and evaluated to determine, on an ongoing basis, how well DLAM's LSTA initiatives are serving VIPL and the wider communities of its patrons and the general public. Periodic surveys and stakeholder meetings will determine the need to adjust and realign priorities to make the most effective use of LSTA funds in the Virgin Islands.

## APPENDIX A

The 2003 Reauthorization of the Museum and Library Services Act of 1996 (20 U.S.C. Chapter 72 Section 9141) specifies that a state library administrative agency (SLAA) shall expend funds for one or more of the following purposes:

- 1) 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 in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills;
- 2) Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. § 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services;
- 3) (a) provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services, and (b) enhance efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services;
- 4) Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations;
- 5) 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) 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 42 U.S.C. § 9902(2)) applicable to a family of the size involved;
- 7) Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks; and



8) Carry out other activities consistent with the purposes set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 9121, as described in the SLAA's plan.