

**Alabama Public Library Service**  
**Evaluation Report For LSTA 5-Year Plan**  
**2003 – 2007**

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Institute of Museum & Library Services**

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**PART I**  
**Introductory Statement and Summary of Impact of IMLS funds**  
**to Support State Library Service**

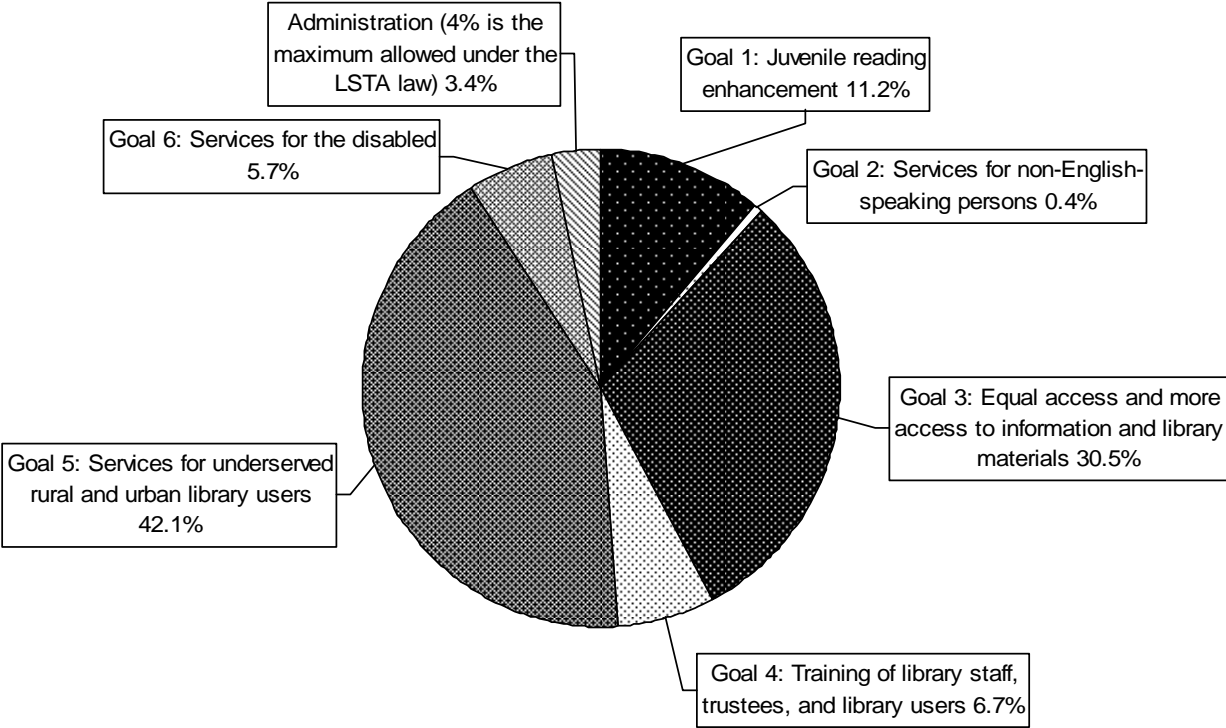
The Alabama Public Library Service has been guided by its LSTA Five-Year Plan in the delivery of library services. The APLS Executive Board, Director Rebecca Mitchell, the LSTA Advisory Council, and APLS staff have followed the plan closely as APLS allocated LSTA funds for statewide purposes and as grant rules were developed, applications reviewed, awards made, and projects conducted and evaluated. The purposes of this evaluation are: (1) to show the results of the plan, (2) to explain the impact and the importance of LSTA support in the four years between October 1, 2002, and September 30, 2006, and (3) to help determine the direction of the next five-year plan.

Parts I, II, and III focus on the facts demonstrating the impact of federal funding over the first four years of the plan as specifically required by IMLS. Part IV provides additional research results and also background information which will be of great assistance as APLS develops its next plan, covering the period 2008-2012. Parts V, VI, and VII provide additional information required by IMLS.

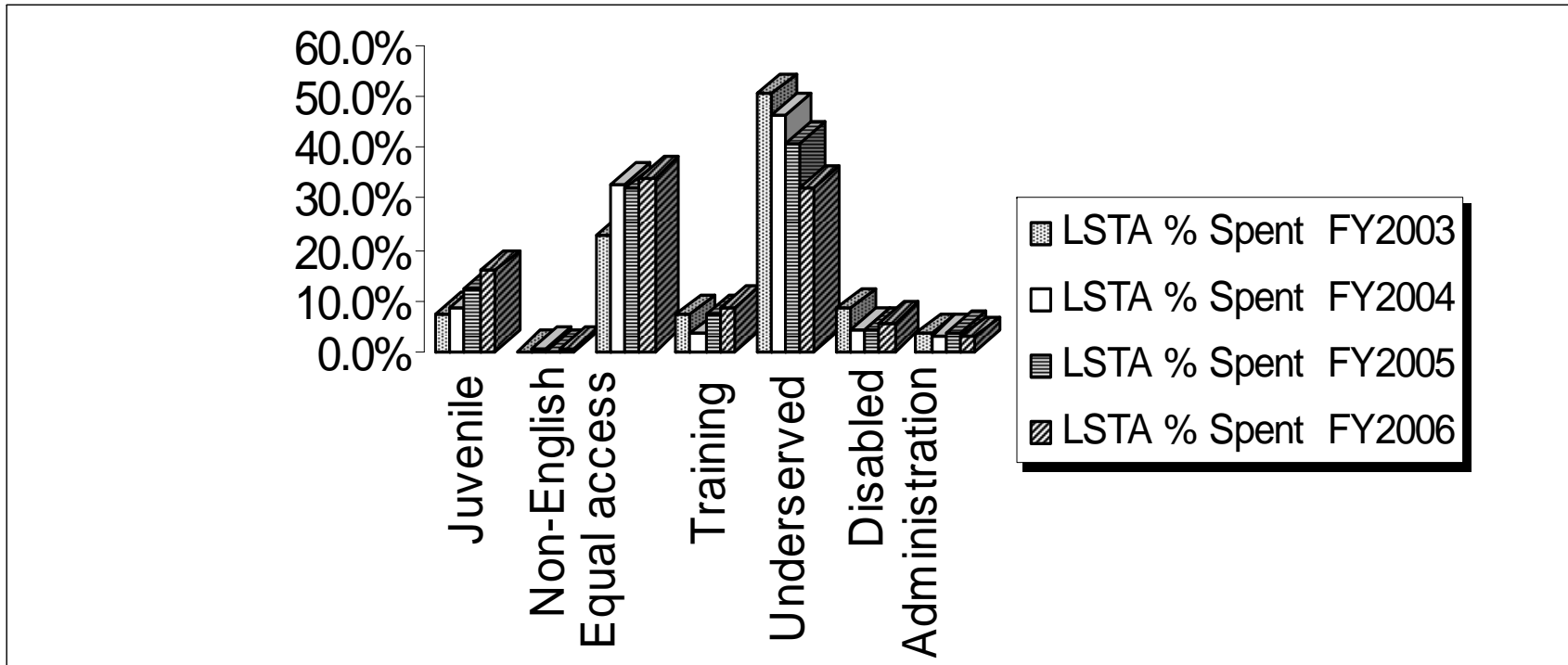
The LSTA Five-Year Plan has six goals, each of which addresses a specific need. Each goal has a set of key output targets, key outcome targets, and activities which support the targets and the overall goal. Below is a summary table listing each goal, the number of projects conducted over the first four years of the plan, the total LSTA funds expended for each goal, and the percent of funds used for each goal. This data is based on the annual reports submitted to IMLS for the same period. On the next two pages there is a pie chart of this data and a column chart showing for each goal the percent changes in funds used each year for the four years.

<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Number of Projects</b>	<b>LSTA Totals</b>	<b>Percent of Funds</b>
1. Juvenile reading enhancement	80	\$1,100,552	11.2%
2. Services for non-English-speaking persons	2	\$40,000	0.4%
3. Equal access and more access to information and library materials	131	\$2,988,874	30.5%
4. Training of library staff, trustees, and library users	10	\$659,146	6.7%
5. Services for underserved rural and urban library users	139	\$4,132,451	42.1%
6. Services for the disabled	14	\$558,113	5.7%
Administration	4	\$331,672	3.4%
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>\$9,810,808</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**LSTA % Spent All Years: FY03-06**



Comparison of LSTA Percent Spent For Each Goal Over Four Years



The term “public library” as used in this report means a library established under the Code of Alabama. It is a general purpose, broad-based library which serves the educational, informational, and recreational needs of persons of all ages in a community, with collections consisting of materials in many subject areas and in a variety of formats in an effort to meet the library needs of all of the residents. It is operated by a single legally established policy-making board of trustees. Such libraries may or may not have branch libraries. Alabama has 210 public libraries fitting this definition. Several of these have one or more branches, and, although branches are essential in providing services, they are not treated or counted separately in this report. There are several additional library entities in the state which serve in an administrative capacity, but these are excluded from the statistics used in this report since they do not have collections or provide direct services to the public.

## **PART II**

### **Overall Report of Results in Achieving Goals, Targets, and Activities Based on Five-Year Plan**

In this section, we include each State goal and provide information about the targets and activities for each goal.

The plan did not have any statements identified as objectives. There are key output targets, key outcome targets, and activities, all of which were developed to help meet a goal or to make progress toward a goal. The report includes the following information for each goal (the information is not necessarily organized in exactly this sequence for every goal, but we tried to organize it in a way that is easiest for the reader to understand):

1. The goal statement
2. A statement of whether we surpassed the goal, met the goal, made progress toward the goal, or did not work toward the goal
3. Each key target, its results, and its impact. The word “impact” is used to identify the description of the impact of the outputs, outcomes, and other activities on the quality of library services and their use.
4. Support activities (these are descriptions of the strategies, services, programs, and activities used to address the key targets)
5. Other activities which supported the goal, their results, and their impact.

**Goal 1:** Enhance juvenile reading through 1) a statewide summer reading program, 2) family literacy programs, and 3) partnerships with schools and other community organizations and institutions serving children and youth, for all Alabama children and youth, to stimulate in young people an interest in reading and in using libraries. (FY2003-2007)

**State whether you surpassed your goal, met your goal, made progress toward your goal, or did not work toward this goal:** APLS made progress toward this goal.

The following key targets were developed specifically to support the statewide summer reading program, identified in Goal 1:

- **Key Output Target 1-A(output):** By year-end FY2006, there will be a 10% increase from the FY2001 summer reading program statistics: 1) in the number of children participating, 2) in the number of books checked out, and 3) in the number of programs offered.
  - **Results:** By year-end FY2006, the following percent changes occurred from the FY2001 summer reading program statistics: 1) the number of children participating: 30.5% increase, 2) the number of books checked out: 18.1% decrease, and 3) the number of programs offered: 18.2% increase.
  - **Impact:** Comparing FY2001 and FY2006 data, the percentage increase in the number of children participating and in the number of local summer programs, exceeded the targets by a considerable amount. However, there was a decrease in the number of books checked out. We believe that this reduction can be partially explained by the fact that there has been a trend for children to read longer and more substantial books, so that the pure number of books checked out does not necessarily indicate that children are reading less.
- **Key Output Target 1-C(output):** By year-end FY2006, 90% of the public libraries will provide children's programming.
  - **Results:** In the summer of FY2006, all 210 public libraries participated in the statewide summer reading program (100%).
  - **Impact:** It is clear that all Alabama public libraries have participated in the summer reading program, making the program accessible to children throughout the state.
- **Key Outcome Target 1-A(outcome):** By year-end FY2006, in a statewide random-sample survey, 50% of those surveyed will indicate that they have heard of the statewide Summer Reading Program.
  - **Results:** 88.7% of those surveyed indicated that they had heard of the statewide Summer Reading Program.
  - **Impact:** A large majority of Alabama residents are aware of the statewide summer reading program.
- **Key Outcome Target 1-B(outcome):** Of those surveyed with children ages 4 to 18, (a) 20% will indicate that they or their families have participated in the statewide Summer Reading Program and (b) 8% will indicate that their children's reading skills have benefited from participation in library-sponsored reading programs.
  - **Results:** (a) 38.1% of those surveyed indicated that one or more members of their household have participated in the statewide Summer Reading Program. (b) 41.4% of those who indicated that household members participated in the Summer Reading Program also indicated that their children's reading skills have benefited from that participation.

- **Impact:** The results indicate that (a) participation in the summer reading program was significantly greater than the target percent and (b) a large percentage of parents whose children participated in the program have observed that their children's reading skills have benefited from the program (percentage greatly exceeding the original target of 8%).
- **Support activities for the above targets:** Each year between FY2003 and FY2006, APLS developed, sponsored, and coordinated a Summer Reading Program in Alabama public libraries. Materials were distributed, including a planning manual, posters, reading logs, bookmarks and certificates.

The following key target was developed specifically to support the family literacy programs, identified in Goal 1:

- **Key Output Target 1-B(output):** By year-end FY2006, there will be a 5% increase from the FY2002 number in the number of libraries participating in family literacy efforts.
  - **Results:** Of 80 public library directors responding to a survey, 13 reported that in FY2002 their libraries offered family literacy programs. 21 reported that in FY2006 their libraries offered adult literacy programs, an increase of 7, or 54%.
  - **Impact:** There is a strong indication that there is a growing interest among libraries to provide family literacy services. Parents as well as their children have benefited from family literacy programs
- **Support activities for the above target 1-B(output):**
  - An activity in the plan supported the above target: "Support and encourage family literacy efforts at the local, regional and state levels."
  - APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for LSTA funds for family literacy projects in the program "Services for Children at Risk". A number of "Children at Risk" projects included family literacy as a component.

The following key target was developed to enhance juvenile reading generally and to support the other targets under Goal 1:

- **Key Output Target 1D(output):** By year-end FY2006, 30,000 children's volumes will have been centrally acquired and distributed to 50% of the public libraries to serve poor and underserved children
  - **Results:** 6,300 children's award books were acquired by APLS in FY2005 for distribution to public libraries. The target was not achieved, but APLS made the decision to redirect funds into competitive projects so that libraries could make their own selections of library materials tailored to the needs of their



communities.

- **Impact:** Books were received by all libraries. Many smaller libraries do not have funds to acquire sufficient materials for their users, and these high-demand books were of especial value to the children they serve.
- **Support activities for the above target:** APLS staff in the Technical Services Division selected materials from lists of books that had received special awards, including lists for Newbery, Caldecott, and Coretta Scott King books.

The following activity was developed to enhance juvenile reading and learning generally and to support partnerships with schools and other community organizations and institutions serving children and youth, as stated in Goal 1:

- **Activity 3:** Provide grants to public libraries and to state departments and institutions to provide services targeted to children and youth at risk. These services may include the development of partnerships with other organizations providing services to children such as schools, pre-schools, youth detention centers, youth courts, housing authorities, community services, and child-care centers. (FY2003-2007).
  - **Results:** As reported to IMLS in its State Program Reports, between October 1, 2002, and September 30, 2006, APLS allocated \$1,100,552 in LSTA funds for a total of 80 local and statewide projects specifically targeted to children and youth at risk.
  - **Impact:** Project evaluation reports were submitted by grant recipients, and for the most part it appeared that the projects were of considerable benefit to children. Included in the above results is one large statewide project, "Homework Alabama". This project was selected for Part III of this report, Results of In-Depth Evaluation. Please see that section for more information about it.

**Goal 2:** Provide library services to non-English-speaking persons through 1) family literacy programs and 2) the provision of library materials. The benefit will be to encourage and increase use of library services by non-English-speaking people. (FY2003-2007)

**State whether you surpassed your goal, met your goal, made progress toward your goal, or did not work toward this goal:** APLS made a small amount of progress toward this goal.

The following key targets were developed to support Goal 2:

- **Key Output Target 2-A(output):** Between the start of FY2003 and year-end FY2006, the number of libraries that will have initiated programs to serve non-English-speaking persons will increase by 10% from the number providing programs in FY2002.
  - **Results:** There were only 2 LSTA-funded non-English-speaking projects

conducted between FY2003 and FY2006, one in FY2004 and one in FY2006. There were no LSTA-funded non-English-speaking projects conducted in FY2002.

- **Key Outcome Target 2-A(outcome):** Libraries conducting programs to serve non-English-speaking persons will conduct surveys of participants between the start of FY2003 and year-end FY2006. The surveys conducted at year-end FY2006 will indicate that there has been a 25% increase in the number of persons reporting a new appreciation of libraries, an understanding of services offered, and an improvement in their lives because of these services.
  - **Results:** Because there were only 2 projects conducted between FY2003 and FY2006, it was determined that surveys would not be relevant.
- **Support activities for the above targets:** APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for LSTA funds for (1) programs to assist persons to learn English as a second language, (2) core collections in Spanish and other languages, including print materials, electronic materials, and databases, (3) training library staff in serving non-English-speaking users, (4) library promotion in languages other than English, and (5) partnering with organizations serving the needs of persons for whom English is a second language. As reported to IMLS in its State Program Reports, between October 1, 2002, and September 30, 2006, APLS allocated \$40,000 in LSTA funds for the two local projects.
- **Impact:** Because there were only 2 projects conducted between FY2003 and FY2006, on a statewide basis this activity had a low impact for non-English-speaking persons. However, there were two libraries which did conduct projects: the Houston-Love Memorial Library in Dothan and the Huntsville-Madison County Public Library.
  - The purpose of project conducted by the Houston-Love Memorial Library was to enable Spanish-speaking patrons to utilize library resources. The library acquired Spanish and bilingual adult and children's books, magazines, newspapers, videos, audio-books, and language sets. It held hour-long Spanish classes for full and part-time staff for ten weeks. The library became better able to assist the patrons who do not have English as their primary language. Circulation of Spanish materials exceeded expectations, and the number of Spanish-speaking patrons increased.
  - The Huntsville-Madison County Public Library acquired ESL materials for independent study and in support of community ESL classes. New ESL patrons are using the library and have expressed appreciation that the outreach effort has been made for their benefit. Local teachers of ESL are using the materials, as well. This is an ongoing project, and local monies have been allocated for continued growth of the collections.

**Goal 3:** Provide equal access and more access to information and library materials, through strengthening the electronic infrastructure within the state, for all Alabamians, to provide them with an equal opportunity to meet their needs for information and library materials. (FY2003-2007)

**State whether you surpassed your goal, met your goal, made progress toward your goal, or did not work toward this goal:** APLS made progress toward this goal.

The following key targets were developed to support Goal 3:

- **Key Output Target 3-A(output):** By year-end FY2006, 90% of all public libraries will have automated integrated systems for circulation, cataloging, and public access catalog service.
  - **Results:** Of 210 public libraries, 86% (181) have automated integrated systems for circulation, cataloging, and public access catalog service.
  - **Impact:** Because of lower costs for equipment and software most libraries can now afford these more efficient, effective, and sophisticated automated systems to benefit their users.
- **Key Output Target 3-B(output):** By year-end FY2006, 70% of all public libraries will have upgraded their Internet downstream speed to be equal to or greater than T1.
  - **Results:** Of 210 public libraries, 61 reported having a standard T1 connection. Other libraries reported the following connections: 1 fractional T1, 82 DSL, 28 cable, 10 ISDN, 5 satellite, 3 fiber, 12 dial-up, 2 no connection, and 6 no information. DSL, cable, and fiber connections are usually at the T1 level or greater in speed. Therefore, there are a total of 174 libraries with a speed equal to or greater than T1, or 83%
  - **Impact:** The above results showed that the target had been exceeded by 13% and that most public libraries have a good Internet downstream speed.
- **Key Output Target 3-C(output):** By year-end FY2005, 50% of the total holdings of public libraries and state-supported universities will be searchable statewide, either virtually or through a union catalog.
  - **Results:** We could not determine the statewide holdings in terms of numbers of volumes held; however, we are able to estimate the percent of public and academic libraries which have their holdings available via Internet searching. By year-end FY2005, approximately 40% of the public libraries and 80% of the academic libraries had their holdings in a statewide union catalog. Over 32 catalogs of public libraries were added FY2006. Since the holdings that are in the union catalog are in the larger academic and public libraries, we are reasonably certain that over 50% of the total state holdings are now searchable online.
  - **Impact:** The results indicated that over half of the holdings of public and academic libraries are listed online. Access to this holdings information helps students and people in all walks of life gain access to the actual books by visiting

the libraries or ordering the books via interlibrary loan.

- **Key Output Target 3-D(output):** By year-end FY2003, APLS will have in place a new electronic interlibrary loan system.
  - **Results:** This target was accomplished.
  - **Impact:** The new electronic interlibrary loan system has several benefits for both librarians and patrons:
    - Nearly all Alabama public libraries have access to the OCLC interlibrary loan subsystem.
    - Any of these libraries can place an interlibrary loan order from another library directly. They do not have to go through any intermediary service, such as their system headquarters or the state agency.
    - Libraries can receive interlibrary loaned materials days sooner than with the previous system.
    - Libraries can easily verify the exact title desired by a patron.
    - Materials can be ordered by physical type (such as large print) or by language.
- **Key Output Target 3-E(output):** In FY2004, APLS will conduct one pilot program to test the viability of providing technical support to public libraries to maintain the electronic infrastructure.
  - **Results:** This target was accomplished. By the end of FY2004, we had conducted a survey and hired 3 technical consultants who provided support on a statewide basis.
  - **Impact:** The pilot program demonstrated the value of the agency's employing persons with expertise in the maintenance of computers, software, and related technology. All public libraries throughout the state may now schedule timely visits from the technical consultants, who are centrally located at the APLS building in Montgomery. The consultants also advise libraries about optimal automation configurations and current costs of equipment and software. The libraries do not have to rely on expensive private companies to maintain their computers, and they can count on consistency and proper documentation of all services provided. The libraries are not charged for the services.
- **Key Outcome Target 3-A(outcome):** By year-end FY2006, in a statewide random-sample survey:
  - (a) 50% of those surveyed will indicate that they have heard of the Alabama Virtual Library.
  - (b) 15% will indicate that they or their family members have benefited from the Alabama Virtual Library.
  - (c) 20% will indicate that they or their family members use a public library at least 4 times a year, and, of these, 50% will indicate that they or their family members have benefited from their library's automated system.
  - **Results:**

(a) 85.2% of those surveyed indicated that they have heard of the Alabama Virtual Library.

(b) 60.3% of those surveyed indicated that one or more household members have used the Alabama Virtual Library.

(c) 95.4% of those surveyed indicated that they or their household members used an Alabama public library at least 4 times in the past 12 months. 81% of those surveyed indicated that they or their household members have benefited from an Alabama public library's automated system.

- **Impact:** The Alabama Virtual Library provides all students, teachers, and citizens of the State of Alabama with online access to essential library and information resources. It is primarily a group of online databases that have magazine, journal, and newspaper articles for research. Through the AVL, an equitable core of information sources are available to every student and citizen in Alabama, raising the level of excellence in schools and communities across the state. The Alabama Virtual Library is a service funded with state tax dollars.

For each element of this target the percent considerably exceeded the target percent. The vast majority of the people (85.2%) are aware of the Alabama Virtual Library. It appears to be well-used, with 60.3% of those surveyed indicating use within their families.

The survey indicated that usage of libraries is high in the state, with most families having members that utilize the library several times a year.

A large percentage of Alabama residents are also aware of the benefits of library automation.

- **Support activities for the above goal and targets:**

- APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for LSTA funds for library technology, including technological equipment, software, rapid telecommunications, partnering with other agencies, upgrading equipment for learning opportunities, and for the digitization of library materials for the purposes of preservation and electronic access. As reported to IMLS in its State Program Reports, between October 1, 2002, and September 30, 2006, APLS allocated \$2,988,874 in LSTA funds for 131 local and statewide projects.
- APLS provided funds for resource-sharing, including the following components: (1) statewide materials and document delivery (electronic and physical delivery), (2) databases, and (3) electronic interlibrary loan.
- APLS utilized both federal and state funds for APLS staff to provide technical assistance consulting to public libraries throughout the state.

**Goal 4:** Provide training for library staff and trustees in all areas of library service, through 1) contract training, 2) training by APLS staff, 3) technology-based paraprofessional and professional training; and provide training for the public in how to use technology to access information. The training is for all professional and non-professional library staff, for library trustees, and for the public, to provide improved library service for the people of Alabama. (FY2003-2007)

**State whether you surpassed your goal, met your goal, made progress toward your goal, or did not work toward this goal:** APLS made progress toward this goal.

The following key targets were developed to support Goal 4:

- **Key Output Target 4-A(output):** By year-end FY2006, APLS will have coordinated and presented 300 workshops and institutes for library staff and trustees with an attendance of 6,000.
  - **Results:** Sessions: 248  
Attendance: 2,756
  - **Impact:** The number of workshops and attendance level did not meet the targets.
- **Key Output Target 4-B(output):** By year-end FY2006, 30 persons will have received grants for undergraduate courses and workshops.
  - **Results:** APLS did not give grants to individuals for undergraduate courses and workshops. In lieu thereof, in FY2005 APLS had a pilot project where funds were awarded to the Tuscaloosa Public Library to create a continuing education course for Alabama library staff. The purpose was to enable library staff across Alabama to improve their collections through greater understanding of and access to collection development philosophy, methods, and resources. The library contracted with faculty from the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies to prepare teaching materials, handouts, and assignments for 10 workshops. Library staff who attended were trained to identify community collection needs, use appropriate collection development tools, and perform a collection assessment and make recommendation for selection, weeding, and acquisitions of materials. 13 participants finished the series and used skills and resources from the workshops to complete projects in their home libraries.
  - **Impact:** The pilot project demonstrated that an individual public library had the capacity to develop a successful educational program. Based on this pilot, APLS has continued to make funds available to an individual library or a cooperating group of libraries for their implementation of library education programs. Public library staff and/or library trustees who reside anywhere within Alabama are eligible for attendance at no cost.
- **Key Output Target 4-C(output):** By year-end FY2006, 12 persons in the part-time professional training program will have earned the MLS.
  - **Results:** 12 people earned the MLS from Fall 2002 through Summer 2006,

meeting the target.

- **Impact:** Library staff have benefited from the educational activities. The public will be better served at their libraries with these new professionally trained librarians.
- **Key Output Target 4-D(output):** By year-end FY2006, 50% of the public libraries will have conducted computer training workshops for library users.
  - **Results:** Of 80 public library directors responding to a survey, 45% reported that their libraries had conducted computer training workshops for library users over the 4 fiscal years ending with FY2006.
  - **Impact:** The target was almost met with 45% of the directors surveyed indicated training for users. We expect that the training enabled users to increase their computer skills and to become more adept at finding information via computer technology.
- **Key Outcome Target 4-A(outcome):** By year-end FY2006, in a survey of library staff who attended workshops, courses and institutes:
  - (a) 80% of those surveyed will indicate that they have applied the computer skills, basic reference skills and other skills which they learned.
  - (b) 80% of those surveyed will indicate that their job confidence and ability level increased as a result of the attendance.
    - **Results:**
      - (a) Of 80 public library directors responding to a survey, 95% reported that they had attended workshops, courses, and institutes sponsored by APLS. Of these, 98.7% reported that they had applied the skills they learned. 62.7% reported learning computer skills, 42.7% reported learning basic reference skills, and 56% reported learning other skills (some of the people learned more than one skill)
      - (b) 92.1% indicated that their job confidence and ability level increased as a result of the attendance.
    - **Impact:** The percentages in the result considerably exceed those in the target. There has been a high level of attendance at educational programs sponsored by APLS. The survey results indicated that the programs have been very beneficial in terms of the use made of the information and in terms of improving librarians' confidence and ability.
- **Support activities for the above goal and targets:**
  - In support of key output target 4-A, APLS coordinated and offered workshops and institutes for public library staff and trustees. Workshops included instruction in the basic skills of librarianship and leadership. Please see the results section above for this target.
  - Originally, in support of key output target 4-B, APLS had planned to make funds available for library personnel and trustees to receive continuing education grants

to attend training on serving patrons with diverse backgrounds and needs. But as explained in the results for that target, in FY2005 APLS modified this activity by having a pilot project where funds were awarded to the Tuscaloosa Public Library to create a continuing education course for Alabama library staff. Please see the results section above for key output target 4-B.

- In support of key output target 4-C, APLS made funds available for professional training leading to the MLS as explained in the results section for that target.
- APLS provided grant recipients with staff training in LSTA grant project development, implementation, and evaluation, through (1) training, (2) materials, and (3) monitoring.
- When APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for LSTA funds for library technology, included was the opportunity to receive funding for the training of users to learn how to access information. This activity supported key output target 4-A.

**Goal 5:** Provide services for underserved rural and urban library users, through the provision of library programs and materials for persons regardless of their location or condition. (FY2003-2007)

**State whether you surpassed your goal, met your goal, made progress toward your goal, or did not work toward this goal:** APLS made progress toward this goal.

The following key targets were developed to support Goal 5:

- **Key Output Target 5-A(output):** By year-end FY2007, 10 public libraries will have started new or improved adult literacy programs.
  - **Results:** Of 80 public library directors responding to a survey, 8 reported that in FY2002 their libraries offered adult literacy programs. 18 reported that in FY2006 their libraries offered adult literacy programs, an increase of 10.
  - **Impact:** The target was achieved. There appears to be a growing trend to provide services to adults needing to improve their literacy skills. These services are greatly needed in Alabama, where statistics indicate that nearly 1 out of 4 Alabama adults is functionally illiterate.
- **Key Output Target 5-B(output):** By year-end FY2007, there will be 4 new library service delivery vehicles serving library users. These vehicles will either add to the current number of vehicles statewide or replace old equipment.
  - **Results:** By year-end FY2006, 5 library service vehicles were acquired with LSTA funds.
  - **Impact:** The five vehicles are now providing outreach services to persons in Dothan, Prichard, Tuscaloosa, Cullman County, and the libraries in the Horseshoe Bend Regional Library. Without LSTA funds, which in most cases



paid for approximately one half the cost of the vehicles, these vehicles may not have been affordable for the libraries that acquired them, and these improved services could not have been offered.

- **Key Output Target 5-C(output):** By year-end FY2007, 10 public libraries will have started new or improved outreach programs.
  - **Results:** Of 80 public library directors responding to a survey, 27 reported that in FY2002 their libraries offered outreach programs. 36 reported that in FY2006 their libraries offered outreach programs, an increase of 11.
  - **Impact:** The target was slightly exceeded with an increase of 11 libraries offering outreach programs.
- **Key Outcome Target 5-A(outcome):** From surveys given to program participants, by year-end FY2006:
  - (a) 75% will indicate that their quality of life has improved.
  - (b) 300 persons will have learned literacy skills by participating in public library literacy programs and by using library materials
  - (c) 350 persons will have learned life-coping skills by participating in special public library programs and by using library materials.
    - **Results:** The measurement method used differed from the one that we had originally planned for. Because of improvements in survey methodology, we were able to administer an online statewide random survey of Alabama residents.
      - (a) In an online statewide random citizen survey 382 respondents were asked in which of the following areas have their lives or the lives of their household members improved through the use of an Alabama public library (the percent following each area is the percentage answering affirmatively): (1) Reading skills-59.7%, (2) Skills for the workplace-35.9%, (3) Personal enrichment-88.7%, (4) Community awareness-46.3%, (5) Computer literacy-34.3%, (6) Cultural awareness-48.4%, (7) Foreign language skills-15.4%, (8) Parenting skills-18.1%, and Other-15.4%.)
      - (b) Of 399 respondents, 65 or 16.3% indicated that they or someone in their household participated in a reading or literacy skill program at the library.
      - (c) Of 399 respondents, 288 or 72.2% indicated that they or someone in their household learned life-coping skills through association with the library.
    - **Impact:** Because the measurement method differed from the one originally planned for, the outcome numbers and percentages used as targets are not directly related to the numbers and percentages resulting from the survey. The online survey is probably more indicative than the planned method in measuring the degree to which people's quality of life, literacy skills, and life-coping skills have been affected by library programs and materials. Personal enrichment was far and away the most frequent response (88.7%) for how libraries improve quality of life for users. Learning life-coping skills was also ranked highly (72.2%). Given that nearly 25% of adult Alabamians are functionally illiterate, the results

indicated that libraries do play a role in helping these people through reading or literacy skill programs: 16.3% of the respondents indicated library use in their families for this purpose. The percentages in the other areas measuring quality of life are fairly significant and show the importance of libraries to the public.

- **Key Outcome Target 5-B(outcome):** From focus groups consisting of library users benefiting from all the programs under this goal, 75% of the participants will indicate that the programs and library materials have satisfied a significant portion of their educational, working, cultural, and leisure-time needs and interests.
  - **Results:** A focus group method was not employed. However, the questions in the statewide public survey using Survey Monkey for the above key outcome target (5A) aimed at getting similar information from library users. The purpose of those questions was to determine the degree to which citizens benefited from public library service in these areas: reading skills, skills for the workplace, personal enrichment, community awareness, computer literacy, cultural awareness, foreign language skills, parenting skills, and other areas.
  - **Impact:** See the impact statement for Target 5-A.
- **Support activities for the above goal and targets:**
  - In support of key output target 5-A, APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for LSTA funds for projects to promote adult literacy, in its program titled “Services for Persons Having Difficulty Using a Library”. Also, libraries could apply for funds for library materials for persons with limited literacy skills in the program “Information Services for Underserved Users”. On a statewide survey given to library directors, it was shown that there has been an increase in the number of adult literacy programs offered, and the actual target number was achieved (10 new adult literacy programs were in place as of FY2006). Please see the results section above for this target.
  - In support of key output target 5-B, APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for LSTA funds for the acquisition and utilization of library service delivery vehicles. The output target was 4 vehicles, and the actual number acquired using LSTA funds was 5, with a total expenditure of \$197,017 in LSTA funds.
  - In support of key output target 5-C, APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for LSTA funds for outreach projects for persons who are homebound and for persons located in such places as institutions, hospitals, nursing homes, and senior citizen centers. Also libraries could apply for funds for books-by-mail projects. These opportunities were in the APLS program “Services for Persons Having Difficulty Using a Library”.

**Goal 6:** Provide improved library services to persons who are blind, visually impaired, or unable to physically utilize traditional library materials. These services will be provided through 1) training staff and customers, 2) the provision of specialized equipment to enable disabled persons to gain access to knowledge and information, and 3) the provision of special library materials. The users will benefit by gaining access to knowledge, information, and recreational materials that otherwise would not be available to them. (FY2003-2007)

**State whether you surpassed your goal, met your goal, made progress toward your goal, or did not work toward this goal:** APLS made progress toward this goal.

The following key targets were developed to support Goal 6:

- **Key Output Target 6-A(output):** By year-end FY2006, in 25% of the public libraries there will be at least one workstation accessible to persons who are blind, visually impaired, hearing-impaired, or unable to physically utilize traditional library materials.
  - **Results:** Of 80 public library directors responding to a survey, 78.8% reported that as of year-end FY2006 their libraries had at least one workstation accessible to persons who are blind, visually impaired, hearing-impaired, or unable to physically utilize traditional library materials.
  - **Impact:** The result percentage was much higher than the original target. This indicates a high degree of sensitivity among libraries for the needs of the handicapped.
- **Key Output Target 6-B(output):** By year-end FY2006, there will be a 10% increase in deposit collections at locations throughout the state, including libraries, schools, hospitals, and senior care facilities. The collections will include recorded books or a demonstration collection consisting of playback equipment and book samples. The target number of deposit collections is 217.
  - **Results:** By year-end FY2002 there were 210 deposit collections. By year-end FY2006 there were 389 deposit collections, an increase of 85%.
  - **Impact:** The result percentage was much higher than the original target. This indicates a high degree of sensitivity among the institutions for the needs of the handicapped.
- **Key Output Target 6-C(output):** By year-end FY2006, 50% of public libraries will have reading materials in a special format for print-impaired users.
  - **Results:** Of 80 public library directors responding to a survey, 96.2% reported that their libraries have reading materials in a special format for print-impaired users. This format could be in the form of large print materials or audio books.
  - **Impact:** The result percentage is much higher than the original target. This indicates that there is a high probability that the needs of most print-impaired users are being at least partially met.
- **Key Output Target 6-D(output):** By year-end FY2006, there will be an 8% increase in the number of active users of the services of the APLS Blind and Physically

Handicapped Division and of the 5 subregional libraries. The target number of active users is 6,500.

- **Results:** By year-end FY2002 there were 5,190 active users. By year-end FY2006 there were 8,350 active users, including approximately 1,400 from Mississippi, a total increase of 61%. We started a contractual service for Mississippi users.
- **Impact:** The result indicates that there is an increased readership in both Alabama and Mississippi.
- **Key Outcome Target 6-A(outcome):** By year-end FY2006, 90% of a sampling of the users of the services of the APLS Blind and Physically Handicapped Division will indicate in a survey that the special format materials they have used have significantly enhanced their lives, as ranked on a numerical scale.
  - **Results:** BPH conducted a telephone survey of its users between 1/10/07 and 1/31/07 as people called in for service. Each person was asked: "On a scale of 1-5, with 5 being very much so, have our materials significantly enhanced your life?" Scale and responses: 1 (not really)--2 people (0.9%) ; 2 (in a way)--1 person (0.5%); 3 (somewhat)--7 people (3.1%); 4 (helpful)--14 people (6.3%); 5 (very much so)--199 people (89.2%). There were a total of 223 users surveyed.
  - **Impact:** 89.2% of those surveyed said they were very much in agreement that the materials had significantly enhanced their lives, only about 1% less than the target percentage.
- **Support activities for the above target:**
  - In support of key output target 6-A (pertaining to the acquisition of workstations accessible to the disabled) APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for LSTA funds for projects serving the disabled, in its program "Services for Those with Disabilities".
  - In support of key output targets 6-B and 6-D, and key outcome target 6-A, APLS supported and enhanced the statewide services of the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, a division of APLS.
  - In support of key output target 6-C (pertaining to reading materials for print-impaired users) APLS offered libraries the opportunity to apply for funds for library materials in its program "Information Services for Underserved Users".

## PART III

### Results of In-Depth Evaluation

**IMLS requires a description of the methods and findings of an in-depth evaluation of at least one goal/objective/program/project that used IMLS funds. If possible, this initiative should be one that produced a significant advance in library service in the state.**

We have selected a project which has produced a significant advance in library service throughout the state: Homework Alabama. Homework Alabama is our name for the service known nationally as Tutor.com, provided by a company with the same name.

#### Description of the Tutor.com service

Tutor.com is an online tutoring service geared toward students in grades four through the beginning level of college in the subjects of math, science, social studies, and English. Students may access the service from any computer connected to the Internet. No special equipment or software is needed.

More than 1,200 professional math, science, English and social studies tutors are available to work with a student at the time he or she needs help. There are no appointments to make or schedules to keep. The student connects online to an experienced tutor in minutes, signing in for a private, one-to-one tutoring session. Depending on the kind of help needed, sessions may take just a few minutes for a quick question (such as a quick algebra question) or more than an hour for a complex concept (such as an advanced chemistry concept). Students and tutors chat using instant messaging, draw problems on an interactive whiteboard, share files to review essays and papers, and browse educational resources on the web together. Tutors work with each student to provide help, not answers, and to bring every session to an educationally sound conclusion. This means that tutors do not do the work for students: they guide them into understanding and solving problems on their own. The service is provided at convenient times when children are not at school.

Each student works with a professional tutor in a secure web environment. Sessions are monitored and students supply feedback on their tutor. Tutors are carefully screened experts, and include current certified teachers, retired teachers, college professors, graduate students, undergraduates from accredited universities, and professionals. Each tutor completes an extensive application process and submits teaching samples showing how they would guide students to discover answers for themselves. Prospective tutors even complete practice sessions with experienced tutors. In addition, every tutor must pass a thorough background check.

Tutors receive regular training, and are assigned mentors who regularly review their sessions, student ratings and feedback to continually improve session quality. Every online tutoring session is completely anonymous. Tutors have no access to any account information; they only see the student's first name, and no personal information is ever exchanged between tutors and students.

Subjects covered include: elementary math, elementary science, algebra I and II, geometry, trigonometry, calculus, earth science, biology, chemistry, physics, English, essay writing, book reports, American history, world history, social studies, and political science.

### Initial Demonstration Project

Under Goal I of the LSTA Five-Year Plan, there is an activity for funding projects to provide services targeted to children and youth at risk, and these services may include the development of partnerships with other organizations providing services to children, including schools. In October 2003 the Harrison Regional Library System, which serves public libraries and citizens in Shelby County just south of Birmingham, was awarded an LSTA grant for a project titled “Homework Help” to demonstrate the feasibility and value of the Tutor.com service. The project made the service available to students in all county libraries. The system trained staff, acquired eight computers for its members, sent staff to 18 county schools to demonstrate the service, and provided workshops for home school associations and PTAs. There were over 550 successful tutoring sessions at the libraries. The project did demonstrate that Tutor.com could help students to better achieve their academic goals.

### Statewide Demonstration

Based on the success of the demonstration in Shelby County, APLS Director Rebecca Mitchell decided to initiate a statewide demonstration of Tutor.com, which APLS called “Homework Alabama”, starting in August 2005. Governor Bob Riley announced the new service on July 27, 2005, at the Pelham Public Library, one of the Shelby County libraries participating in the initial demonstration. In August and September, 2005, there were 19,104 tutoring sessions with an average length of 17 minutes. The Homework Alabama project was continued in FY2006 (from October 1, 2005, through September 30, 2006). In FY2006 there were 74,832 sessions with an approximate average length of 20 minutes. The service is still ongoing and is now being funded partially with state funds. APLS has requested more state funds for the future to help support the program.

Not only can users access the service free using public access computers at almost all 210 public libraries, they can also log on from any computer with Internet access. They simply have to provide their zip codes for authentication. The service is available Sunday - Thursday -- 3p.m. until 10 p.m. To connect to the service student goes to [www.homeworkalabama.org](http://www.homeworkalabama.org), types in their zip code, grade level and subject. When the session is complete, students can print their session for reference or share it with a parent or teacher.

Homework Alabama was included under Goal I of our plan and was referred to on page 3 in the description of Activity 3.

**The best part of Homework Alabama is that it levels the educational playing field. Kids in rural farming communities have the same access to help as kids in large urban areas. This service reflects the mission of APLS, which includes providing equitable access to library information resources and services to enable all Alabamians to satisfy their educational needs.**

## PART IV

### **Additional Research Results and Analysis of the Current Plan, and Background Information to Provide Direction for the Next Plan**

#### PART 1. Project Overview

In May 2006, the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) awarded a grant to the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alabama, for collection and analysis of performance data on the State's current LSTA five-year plan and on preferences, priorities and suggestions from the library community to inform the planning process for the five-year plan that will be developed by APLS to cover 2007 through 2012.

Project Staff: Elizabeth Aversa, Ph.D., served as principal investigator for this project. Aversa is director and professor at the School of Library and Information Studies, coming to this project with over thirty-five years experience in public and state library development, consulting, and library education. Jennifer Mathews served as project assistant. Mathews, an MLIS graduate of the School of Library and Information Studies, is currently a doctoral student in the College of Communication and Information Sciences at the University of Alabama. She is an experienced editor of both print and web-based materials, having been employed in the publishing industry for over a decade before entering graduate school.

Methodology: Three methods were used to collect the data: a series of seven hearings that were held at different locations throughout the State; a survey that was administered to the public library community and interested citizens in the communities served by Alabama's public libraries; and a user survey that addressed specific performance targets in the 2002-2007 state plan. In addition, project staff reviewed documents associated with the activities supported by LSTA over the period covered by the current five-year plan.

The hearings, referenced here as "town meetings," took place in June 2006. They provided structured opportunities for interested parties to provide input on both the achievements and shortcomings of the present plan and to make suggestions for consideration for the next five-year plan. Procedures associated with and findings from the town meetings are summarized in this report.

The first survey directed to the entire Alabama library community was made available online and in print-on-paper form throughout the month of October 2006. Respondents to this survey included library users, directors, staff members, trustees, and government officials. Perseus SurveySolutions ® software was used as the online data collection vehicle in this survey, and results were sent to the School's server for analysis. Posters in libraries and press releases in local news media invited widespread participation in the survey, and 605 usable responses were logged. Of the responses, 485 were received online and 120 were returned by mail. For the questionnaire, see Appendix 13.

The second survey of library users was made available between December 8, 2006 and January 5, 2007. As with the first survey, users were notified of the opportunity to participate by notices in libraries and by local press releases. This survey was directed specifically to users of Alabama

public libraries. Survey Software SurveyMonkey was utilized, and the questionnaire was mounted by the Alabama Public Library Service with resultant data delivered to the School for analysis. A total of 421 survey responses were received. See Appendix 15 for the full questionnaire.

Reporting: This report covers the period May 2006 through January 2007. It provides summary data, interpretation, and discussion of the findings from the data collection activities and review of data on expenditures of LSTA funds during the period covered by the 2002-2007 state plan.

PART 2. Town Meetings

Preparation for Town Meetings: In May 2006, APLS staff (Jim Smith and others) and Aversa met with APLS Director Rebecca Mitchell to establish protocol for the project, to set calendars, and to develop invitations to the town meetings. APLS consultants determined the locations for the meetings. Town meetings were scheduled for the locations, dates, and times reported in Table 1.

Table 1. Town Meeting Schedule

<b>Town</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Time</b>
Daphne	June 3, 2006	Public Library	10 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Homewood	June 10, 2006	Public Library	10 a.m.- 1:00 p.m.
Huntsville	June 12, 2006	Public Library	1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Demopolis	June 17, 2006	Public Library	10 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Dothan*	June 19, 2006	Public Library	1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Montgomery	June 21, 2006	APLS HQ.	1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.
Cullman	June 28, 2006	City Hall	1:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m.

\* The Dothan meeting was added to the schedule in June.

The town meeting invitations were sent by APLS to libraries and municipal and county representatives throughout Alabama and via e-mail over several listservs during the first week in May. Reminders were sent over the APLS listserv again during the first week in June. See Appendix 1, Appendix 2, and Appendix 3 for copies of town meeting invitations.

Attendance at Town Meetings: The seven town meetings were held according to the established schedule. Attendance at the meetings is noted in Table 2 on the following page.



Table 2. Town Meeting Attendance by Location

Location	Number of Participants, excluding UA project staff and APLS staff
Daphne	10
Homewood	11
Huntsville	22
Demopolis	6
Dothan	13
Montgomery	19
Cullman	10
Total	~91

Attendees at the town meetings were asked to sign in at the door; however, every participant was not accounted for, so we expect that there may have been closer to 100 participants across the seven locations. Table 2 shows the number of participants who signed in at each location.

Participants in town meetings included practicing librarians, members of library boards, municipal officials, State government officials, and local citizens.

By far, the greatest number of participants represented directors of public libraries. Thirty-six public library directors attended, accounting for greater than forty percent of all participants. The second most prevalent participant category was library staff, with twenty-five attendees. Finally, ten library board members accounted for just over ten percent of participants. The remaining participants in the town meetings were distributed across several categories including citizens and governmental officials. Table 3 is a summary of participant demographics. Appendix 4 lists all participants.

Table 3. Summary of Participant Demographics

Participant Category	Percentage of Participants	Number of Participants
Library Directors	39.6	36
Library Staff	27.5	25
Library Board Members/Trustees	11.0	10
Government Officials (all levels)	11.0	10
Citizens	9.9	9
Unknown	~ 1.0	1
Total for All Categories	~100.00	91

Town Meeting Processes and Procedures: Before beginning the series of town meetings, the UA staff, with input from APLS staff, established broad categories of library programs and services that would be used as “discussion starters” at the meetings. These were meant to provide useful frameworks for discussions of (1) how well the state had addressed the priorities in the present plan and (2) what the priorities should be for the forthcoming (2007-2012) plan.

First, a review of the 2002-2007 LSTA Plan yielded six priorities. These were used to frame the discussions of performance on the current state plan for LSTA. The six priorities that were addressed were based on the six goals in the plan:

1. Juvenile Reading Enhancement
2. Service to Non-English Speakers
3. Equal Access & More Access to Library Materials

4. Training of Staff, Trustees, and Users
5. Service to Underserved Rural and Urban Users
6. Service to the Disabled<sup>1</sup>

The six priorities were listed on handouts and participants in the meetings were directed to write comments on each and to discuss whether the priorities were still valid, whether they had been adequately addressed by the activities of the past five years, and whether or not they should continue to be identified as priority areas in the coming five-year plan period. During each three-hour town meeting, about forty-five minutes were devoted to discussion of the previous plan's priorities. The preliminary findings are outlined below.

Second, in order to develop a framework for discussion of possibilities for the 2007-2012 plan, UA staff reviewed library services and programs that were recorded in town meetings held prior to preparation of the current (2002-2007) and previous (1998-2002) LSTA plans. The individual priorities were then classified into broad categories or "themes." Aversa and Mathews first established seven categories independently, and then collaboratively named the categories. There were five additional service and program types that did not fit neatly into the categories already identified, so through discussion and negotiation, they determined that the five could be collapsed into three new categories. These were named and added to the list of seven. The resultant ten categories were used as "discussion starters" at the town meetings. The ten broad categories were listed on flip charts and provided the organizing scheme for the recording of suggestions from the participants at the meetings. The categories were:

1. Automation & Systems
2. Collaboration & Cooperation
3. Marketing, Public Relations & Communication
4. Materials
5. Programs & Services (other than statewide)
6. Statewide Special Programs
7. Support for Libraries
8. Targeted User Groups
9. Technology Development
10. Training and Education of Library Personnel

Conduct of Town Meetings: Each town meeting consisted of two parts: consideration of progress on priorities from the 2002-2007 plan, and development of suggestions and recommendations for inclusion in the 2007-2012 plan that will be written in 2007. So that participants would be aware of the modified nominal group process to be followed in the meeting, a handout was developed and distributed to all participants at the beginning of each meeting. Appendix 5 contains the handout with instructions for the meeting's process.

After following the process outlined in the handout, new recommendations in each category were ranked. All suggestions were recorded under the ten headings, and the responses were tallied. The results are reported below.

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<sup>1</sup> The six areas listed here referred to in various ways throughout this report. They are referred to as "priorities," "goals," and "programs" but all refer to APLS efforts to address needs in the six areas.

Participants were given the opportunity to add to the recommendations after the meetings by e-mailing the UA project staff at [stateplan@slis.ua.edu](mailto:stateplan@slis.ua.edu).

Town Meeting Findings Regarding the Present LSTA Plan: Town meeting participants at all locations supported continuing to address the priorities in current plan.

Regarding priority 1, Juvenile Reading Enhancement, participants valued the summer reading programs. Librarians stated that the materials were generally useful, although several from larger libraries reported modifying the materials to suit their community's needs. The value of serving youth in the summers was stated repeatedly by librarians from both large and small libraries.

Priority 2, Service to Non-English Speakers, evoked considerable discussion at meetings in five locations. There was a divided opinion regarding the need to support this priority. Several librarians stated that this was not an immediate priority in their communities, while others cited the need to address the needs of non-English speakers whose numbers are increasing in selected areas of the State. The majority of participants who addressed this priority felt that the real need was to get non-English speakers into the library and to make them aware of what the libraries have to offer. Participants from many libraries with non-English speaking populations stated that they could not provide the number and variety of materials that the populations would require to be well served. Several noted that the children of new arrivals in Alabama were being exposed to library services while older family members were not library users. Several noted difficulty in appealing to non-English speakers who were afraid of using the library, possibly due to immigration issues.

Priority 3, Equal Access and More Access to Library Materials, was a priority that most participants believed to need continuation. Representatives of small libraries valued book grants, while representatives of larger libraries stated that they needed continued support for online access, wireless networks, and other forms of information access through technology. A number of librarians suggested that they needed support for library facilities, noting that although buildings are not supported via LSTA funds, sources for funding facilities need to be identified so that the libraries can provide enhanced access to more patrons.

Needs to continue support for the Technology Circuit Riders and AVL were frequently mentioned. These services, along with Homework Alabama, were programs that were described as essential and of the highest value.

Several participants suggested that priorities 2 and 3 should be combined with priority 6 for an overall "access" priority.

Priority 4, Training of Staff, Trustees and Users, was almost unanimously cited as a priority that should continue. From continuing professional education to workshops in best library practice and grant writing to funding for graduate study leading to the MLIS degree, there was support for this priority. Several representatives of smaller libraries expressed enthusiasm for trustee training.

Priority 5, Service to Underserved Rural and Urban Users, was the least discussed priority across town meeting locations, since participants noted that other priorities, especially Priority 3, incorporated this priority.

Priority 6, Service to the Disabled, was regarded as an important priority by several participants. However, participants at Cullman and at Dothan noted that new facilities, or substantive renovations, would be required in some libraries to provide access and to meet ADA requirements.

The most notable result of the discussion of current priorities was the lack of willingness to abandon the current priorities. In general, the consensus was that progress has been made on the priorities, but that there remains much to be done. Recommendations for the 2007-2012 plan reflected many of the present priorities. This project’s document analysis shed additional light on the distribution of funds across the priorities and progress that was made during the period covered by the present LSTA plan. This is discussed below.

Town Meeting Suggestions and Recommendations for the Future: Town meeting participants generated hundreds of suggestions and recommendations for inclusion in the new state plan. After the suggestions were developed and recorded, using the modified nominal group technique described above, participants completed two ranking exercises. First, they were asked to rank the top three priorities *among* the ten established categories. Next, they were invited to rank the top three recommended priorities *within* each of the ten broad categories.

Table 4 summarizes the rankings on the ten broad categories, or master topics, of services and programs.

Table 4 . Master Topic Rankings, by location.

Master Topics	Ranked Priorities						
	Daphne	Homewood	Huntsville	Demopolis	Dothan	Montgomery	Cullman
Automation & Systems							
Collaboration & Cooperation	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>				<b>3</b>	
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>			<b>1</b>
Materials				<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>	
Programs & Services	<b>2</b>						
Statewide Special Programs			<b>3</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>3</b>
Support for Libraries			<b>2</b>		<b>1</b>		
Targeted User Groups							<b>2</b>
Technology Development				<b>2</b>			
Training & Education of Library Personnel	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>			<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	

Each location has three (or more if there was a tie) priorities listed. They are ranked 1 (the most “first priority” votes) through 3 (the third ranked item). It is clear from the table, then, that participants at four of the seven locations ranked “Marketing, Public Relations and Communications” as the most pressing need, and that an additional group at a fifth location ranked this area in the top three. On the other hand, no group of participants at any location made “Automation and Systems” a top tier priority. It is important to understand that this does not mean that there was not discussion of the less highly ranked and unranked topics; there were many suggestions made in *all* categories. Table 4 simply summarizes the top three priorities identified at the seven town meetings.

In terms of similarities between the town meeting groups, the Homewood and Daphne meetings produced very similar rankings, putting Collaboration and Cooperation, Marketing & Public Relations, and Training & Education for Personnel at the top of their lists. Montgomery’s group also ranked Collaboration & Cooperation and Education & Training in the top three. Huntsville and Dothan gave top rankings to Statewide Programs and Support of Libraries as issues to be addressed in the next State plan.

After survey data was collected in October 2006, additional analysis of the similarities and differences around the State were done, and findings are discussed for the individual surveys in the following sections.

Table 5 summarizes the number of top tier (first, second, or third place) votes received by each category for all the town meetings. This reflects, then, the overall priorities for consideration for inclusion in the next state plan as brought forth by the nearly 100 participants in the ranking process.

Table 5. Master topic/category votes, by topic/category name

<b>Master topic/Category</b>	<b>Number of 1, 2, or 3 votes</b>
Automation & Systems	0
Collaboration & Cooperation	3
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	5
Materials	2
Programs & Services	1
Statewide Special Programs	3
Support for Libraries	2
Targeted User Groups	1
Technology Development	1
Training & Education of Library Personnel	4

Table 6 indicates the ranking of the categories, sorted from the most to the least 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place votes.

Table 6. Rankings of Major Topic/Categories

Rank position	No. of 1, 2, or 3 votes	Master topic/category
1	5	Marketing, Public Relations, & Communications
2	4	Training & Education of Library Personnel
3	3	Collaboration & Cooperation
4	3	Statewide Special Programs
5	2	Materials
6	2	Support for Libraries
7	1	Programs & Services
8	1	Targeted User Groups
9	1	Technology Development
10	0	Automation & Systems

While Appendices 6 through 12 include within-category priorities identified by participants at the town meeting locations, the rankings suggest that for future plans, participants in the town meetings want to see increased communication and marketing of the libraries, additional education and training of librarians, and collaborative and statewide programs. As a caution, however, it should be recognized that over sixty-five percent of participants in the town meetings were directors or staff members of public libraries in the state. Table 6 could be interpreted as reflective primarily of Alabama library directors and staff, since fewer than one-third of the participants could be categorized as non-affiliated library users.

Town Meeting Summary: When considering performance on goals in the present plan, participants in the town meetings, primarily library directors, staff and trustees (78 percent of participants), rated goals related to juvenile reading enhancement (goal 1 in the present state plan), equal and more access to information and library materials (goal 3), and training of library staff, trustees and users (goal 4) as having been the best served during 2002-2006. There was near unanimous agreement that those priority areas should continue to be addressed in the future. There was reluctance on the part of participants to eliminate any of the other current priorities, while several participants noted the need for improved focus on the underserved (including non-English speakers) and the disabled.

Town meeting participants suggested, at more than one location, that the goals of “equal and more access...” and “underserved” be combined.

Participants were particularly vocal about priorities and programs that should be addressed in the next five-year plan. Participants were unequivocal in their recognition of the need for libraries to better communicate with funders, users, and potential users. The category “public relations, marketing, and communication” was the most highly ranked priority for the future, garnering the highest number of votes as first priority.

Statewide programs were appreciated by the participants; they spoke highly of the work of APLS in providing programs to libraries across the state. Among statewide programs that were identified as high priorities for the future, Homework Alabama, the Alabama Virtual Library, summer reading programs, and the technology circuit rider program were frequently mentioned. Education and training of library personnel and trustees was also a priority, but the variety of

needs ranged from “training staff who don’t want to admit the need for skills improvement” to “board training” and certification of public librarians.

Town meeting participants generally focused more on programs than materials as priorities, suggesting, for example, that “we have enough technology” but “we need to know how to use it and how to instruct our patrons on its use.” Library personnel from smaller libraries, however, more often mentioned the need for direct assistance with everything from building their collections to paying the utility bills.

An area that was not addressed in the state plan for 2002-2007 was the need for library facilities. This was due to the fact that LSTA does not support construction, renovation and maintenance of library facilities and the plan was for LSTA funded programs and materials. However, at every town meeting the need for new, remodeled or expanded physical facilities was identified by at least one participant.

With these preliminary findings in mind, we constructed and administered the first statewide survey.

### PART 3. Statewide Survey to Augment Town Meetings (Survey 1)

Purpose of Survey 1: The purpose of the first survey was to enable Alabamians who could nor or did not attend the town meetings to express their views on the state of Alabama libraries in relation to the goals stated in the 2002-2007 state plan and to communicate their priorities for the next five years. The online survey was available between October 1 and October 31, 2006. Print-on-paper surveys were also available and usable replies were included in the analysis if postmarked by November 1, 2006.

Survey 1: A thirty-item survey was developed for online response and vetted by APLS staff. An announcement of the survey’s availability was made over the APLS library listserv, and posters announcing the survey and encouraging participation were distributed to libraries throughout the state. Both a printable poster and paper copies were available for use by local libraries in publicizing the survey.

Six survey items were designed to collect respondent demographic information such as age, county of residence, sex, length of residency in Alabama, and role in the library community. The remaining questions required respondents to report on library services that they used as well as ranking performance of Alabama’s libraries on the six goals in the present state plan. Respondents were also given the opportunity to identify priorities for the future, to rate the importance of various services that are or might be provided by libraries, and to identify the five most important areas that they felt should be concerns of their libraries during the next five years.

Every effort was made to give respondents to the survey the same opportunity to provide input to the evaluation and planning processes that participants in the town meeting had. Those who answered the survey were given an e-mail address to use to make inquiries about the

questionnaire just as participants in the town meetings were encouraged to ask questions or provide additional data after the meetings.

Survey 1 is included in Appendix 13.

Participation in Survey 1: A total of 605 responses were received: 485 online and 120 by mail. Usable responses totaled 594. This represents about 1.5 percent of 1 percent of Alabama’s estimated population of 4.5 million. The demographics of respondents are summarized in Tables 7 through 11.

Table 7. Summary of Respondent Roles in the Library Community, Survey 1

<b>Respondent Category</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
User of libraries	46	274
Library staff member	34	201
Library director	9	54
Other	6	37
Library trustee	5	28
Total	100	594

With nearly 50 percent of the respondents reporting to be “users,” it was expected that the overall results of the survey might differ from the findings from the town meetings where the greatest number of participants were library directors and staff members.

Table 8. Gender of Respondents, Survey 1

<b>Gender of Respondent</b>	<b>Percentage of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Male	17	100
Female	83	494
Total	100	594

Table 9. Length of Alabama Residence of Respondents, Survey 1

<b>Tenure in Alabama</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
Ten or more years	87	514
Six to ten years	6	38
One to five years	5	32
Less than one year	2	9
No answer	>1	1
Total	100	594

Table 10. Age of Respondents, Survey 1

<b>Age in Years</b>	<b>Percent of Respondents</b>	<b>Number of Respondents</b>
46-60	43	256
31-45	27	158
Over 60	17	101
21-30	11	68
Under 21	2	11
All	100	594



The data on gender and ages of respondents to the questionnaire is the same as that reported by the respondents to the second survey. And although ages were not requested of the participants in the town meetings, the genders were very similar in their representation: 84 percent female and 16 percent male.

The greatest number of respondents to Survey 1 was female, 31 years old or older, and long-time residents of the state. The respondents were almost evenly divided between those directly employed by the libraries and users of the libraries.

Regarding geographical distribution of respondents, fifty-four counties contributed at least one response to Survey 1. More metropolitan counties contributed the greatest share of respondents, as would be expected. For example, the Birmingham area accounted for 155 responses (28 percent of the total (Jefferson and Shelby counties), while 24 smaller counties contributed the same percentage of responses. As to the counties represented by respondents, the counties contributing two or higher percentages of the total are listed in Table 11.

Table 11. Counties Represented by >2 percent of Responses to Survey 1.

<b>County</b>	<b>No. of Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage of Responses</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Jefferson	137	23	23
Mobile	55	9	32
Madison	47	8	40
Morgan	38	6	46
Calhoun	37	6	52
Colbert	36	6	58
Baldwin	29	5	63
Shelby	28	5	68
Tuscaloosa	21	4	72
Cullman	13	2	74
Montgomery	12	2	76
Tallapoosa	11	2	78
Jackson	10	2	80
Talladega	10	2	82
Escambia	9	2	84
Lee	9	2	86

Fourteen of the fifteen counties that contributed the total of over 85 percent of responses have populations of 50,000 or more (according to the 2000 census). Of the counties contributing the greatest number of respondents, only Tallapoosa County had fewer than 50,000 people in 2000. The state's three highest population counties contributed 40 percent of the survey responses.

Survey 1 Findings Regarding the Present LSTA Plan: Respondents to Survey 1 were asked to identify the single program area for which they believed Alabama libraries are “doing the best job.” The programs identified in this forced choice question were directly related to the six goals set in the 2002-2007 state plan.

Half of all respondents (n=298) named “juvenile reading programs” as the area in which Alabama libraries are doing the best job. Table 12 summarizes findings on the question “Select

the one program area in which you believe Alabama libraries are doing the best job” for all respondents and for separate categories of respondents.

Congruence among the categories of respondents is apparent. Only the library trustees voted another goal than “juvenile reading” higher in terms of a good job done by Alabama libraries. The trustees voted for “more and equal access” more often, although “juvenile reading” received the second highest number of votes. Trustees, on average, were older than those in other groups; they selected services to the disabled more often as an area in which libraries do well. (Almost half the trustee respondents reported to be “over 60” years of age, while only 17 percent of all respondents to the survey were over 60.)

Table 12. Programs Ranked “Best” by Respondents, Survey 1

Category→	Library directors n=54	Library staff n=200	Library trustees n=26	Library users n=266	Others n=37	All n=589
↓ Goal	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent
Juvenile reading	1 44%	1 54%	2 31%	1 48%	1 43%	1 50%
Access	2 37%	2 29%	1 42%	2 27%	2 41%	2 30%
Training	3 9%	3 9%	3 15%	3 15%	3 8%	3 12%
Disabled	4 4%	4 3%	4 8%	4 7%	5 3%	4 5%
Underserved	4 4%	4 3%	5 4%	5 2%	4 5%	5 3%
Non-English speaking	5 2%	5 2%	6 0%	6 1%	6 0%	6 <1%

Table 12 indicates not only congruence between respondent groups, but wide ranges between the programs most cited as “best” and the other priorities. In the cases of all respondent groups, the top two programs accounted for over 70 percent of the votes. This suggests that respondents were easily able to discriminate between the programs, and to decide the areas in which the libraries are doing a good job. Juvenile reading and access were the goals on which users agreed that a good job is being done.

Table 13, on the other hand, shows a different picture. There is little congruence between the groups of respondents and little difference among the numbers of votes for programs deemed “needing improvement.” The goals related to the “underserved” and “non-English speaking” received more mentions than others as “needing improvement,” but all the other program areas except those for the “disabled” received at least one second place ranking. Five ties within respondent groupings suggests that identifying programs needing improvement was a more difficult task than identifying and ranking program areas that are regarded as being done well. If, as some suggested, the access category were broadened to include special populations (non-English speaking, disabled, and the underserved), then “access” would have been the category most noted as “needing improvement.”

Table 13. Programs Identified as “Needing Improvement,” Survey 1

Category→	Library directors n=53	Library staff n=201	Library trustees n=26	Library users n=266	Others n=35	All n=592
↓Goal	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent	Rank/Percent
Juvenile Reading	4 11%	6 7%	2 19%	5 11%	2 17%	6 10%
Access	5 9%	4 15%	4 8%	1 24%	2 17%	3 19%
Training	3 17%	3 19%	2 19%	4 15%	3 14%	4 16%
Disabled	6 8%	5 9%	3 15%	4 15%	3 14%	5 12%
Underserved	1 30%	2 23%	1 34%	2 20%	3 14%	1 22%
Non-English speaking	2 25%	1 27%	4 8%	3 18%	1 23%	2 21%

As with the participants in the town meetings, those who took the survey were asked to rank the six priorities or goals identified in the 2002-2007 state plan on the basis of importance with a ranking of one being the most important and six being the least important. Table 14 illustrates the overall rankings by the five respondent groups.

Table 14. Rankings of Goals in Order of Importance, Survey 1

Category→	Library directors n=53	Library staff n=201	Library trustees n=26	Library users n=266	Others n=35
↓Goal	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank	Rank
Juvenile Reading	1	2	3	2	2
Access	3	1	1	1	1
Training	4	4	4	4	4
Disabled	5	6	6	6	5
Underserved	2	5	5	5	6
Non-English speaking	6	3	2	3	3

Library staff and library users agreed on every priority: they ranked access as most important, juvenile reading enhancement as second most important and services to non-English speakers as third. On the three goals ranked most important, respondents who characterized themselves as “others” agreed. Library trustees and library directors gave more importance to services for underserved users and services to non-English speakers. Library directors were the only respondents to rank juvenile reading enhancement as the most important goal. Library directors were alone in voting service to non-English speakers in last place.

Training of library staff, trustees, and users was ranked fourth in importance by all categories of respondents, making this the only area on which all groups agreed. Providing services for the disabled and for underserved users ranked lowest in importance by all respondents except library directors.

It is notable that respondents ranked the programs that were identified as “areas in which Alabama libraries are doing the best job” as most important and those program areas that were identified as “needing improvement” as less important.

Survey 1 Findings on Specific LSTA Priorities: Survey respondents, regardless of their roles as library directors, library staff members, trustees, or users, shared the view that Alabama libraries are having an impact on several broad goals identified in the 2002-2007 state plan.

Priority 1, Juvenile Reading Enhancement, was regarded as an area in which Alabama libraries are doing a good job. Library directors, staff members, library users, and others agreed that this priority is being successfully addressed by the libraries. Only library trustees selected another priority as the one for which the libraries are doing the “best job.” Of the six areas addressed in the current state plan, Juvenile Reading Enhancement was regarded by survey respondents as the one least needing improvement.

Of the six priority areas in the current state plan, Juvenile Reading Enhancement ranked first in importance by library directors and second in importance by library staff, users, and others. Only library trustees ranked this category as third in importance.

Priority 2, Service to Non-English Speakers, was selected as the priority in which Alabama libraries are doing a good job by fewer than 1 percent of survey respondents, and the priority was identified as “needing improvement” by 22 percent of respondents. This goal was ranked second or third in importance by all categories of respondents except library directors who voted this priority 6<sup>th</sup> in importance in a field of six priorities. The divided opinion regarding this priority was evident in town meeting discussions, and it is reflected in the fact that respondents generally reported it to be an important area but one on which the libraries have performed poorly. This is the only priority that was reported to be important but not yet successfully addressed by Alabama libraries.

Priority 3, Equal Access and More Access to Library Materials, was the priority that received the second highest number of votes as the priority area on which Alabama libraries are doing the best job. Trustees ranked this priority first while all other categories of respondents voted it second. In terms of importance, access was ranked first by all categories of respondents except library directors, who ranked it third after juvenile reading enhancement and providing services to underserved users.

Priority 4, Training of Staff, Trustees, and Users, was ranked fourth in importance by all categories of respondents, and third when respondents selected the one program for which they believe Alabama libraries perform best.

Comments by respondents identified a broad range of needs in the training area. Several comments focused on the need for training in customer service, while others suggested the need for training in research and technology skills.

Priority 5, Service to Underserved Rural and Urban Users, was not regarded as important as other categories; it ranked fifth or sixth in importance by all categories of respondents except

library directors who ranked it second. This priority ranked first in “needing improvement” and fifth (of six priorities) in votes as an area where Alabama libraries are doing the “best job.”

Comments from respondents suggested that there was some misunderstanding of this priority. One comment was, “Who the heck are the underserved?”

Priority 6, Service to the Disabled, was ranked last or next to last in importance by all categories of respondents. Five percent of the respondents selected this priority as the one on which Alabama libraries are doing the “best job,” ranking it fourth overall. This priority, and service to the aging population, received positive comments in the open ended comment section of the questionnaire.

Survey 1 Recommendations for the Future: The survey asked respondents to identify the existing goals that should continue to be addressed in the next five-year state plan. All six areas received significant numbers of votes and the number of votes reflected clearly the items respondents had ranked as important, regardless of the relative “good job” that they stated was being done in each area. Table 15 lists the priority areas and the number of votes each received as a priority that should continue to be addressed in the future.

Table 15. Priority program areas for the future, by number of votes, Survey 1

Priority area or goal	Number of votes to continue addressing the priority in 2007-2012
Juvenile reading enhancement	490
Equal access and more access to information and library materials	405
Training of library staff, trustees, and users	393
Services to the disabled	339
Services for underserved rural and urban users	335
Services to non-English speakers	268

In order to determine if there were regional differences in the preferences given to continuation of the six existing priority or program area, the findings were analyzed by regions of the state. Nine regions were defined; they included the counties listed below.

1. Colbert, Cullman, Fayette, Franklin, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Marion, Morgan, Walker, Winston (102 respondents)
2. Bibb, Greene, Dallas, Hale, Lowndes, Marengo, Perry, Pickens Sumter, Tuscaloosa, Wilcox (29 respondents)
3. Baldwin, Butler, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe, Washington (208 respondents)
4. Blount, Calhoun, Cherokee, Clay, Cleburne, DeKalb, Etowah, Jackson, Marshall, Randolph, Talladega (281 respondents)
5. Autauga, Chambers, Chilton, Coosa, Elmore, Lee, Macon, Russell, St. Clair, Shelby, Tallapoosa (64 respondents)

6. Barbour, Bullock, Coffee, Covington, Crenshaw, Dale, Geneva, Henry, Houston, Pike (18 respondents)
7. Jefferson (137 respondents)
8. Madison (47 respondents)
9. Montgomery (12 respondents)

Table 16 indicates that all regions gave the highest number of votes to the continuation of juvenile reading enhancement. All regions except region 5 and region 6 (primarily rural southeastern counties) identified access and training as the second or third priorities for continuation. Only regions 5 and 6 listed services to the underserved in their top three.

Table 16. Priority Areas for the Future, by Region and Number of Votes, Survey 1

	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5	Region 6	Region 7	Region 8	Region 9
<b>Juvenile reading</b>	78	23	88	62	52	15	109	38	11
<b>Non-English</b>	38	15	48	31	27	5	66	24	7
<b>Access</b>	64	20	73	45	43	11	96	34	10
<b>Training</b>	60	24	68	50	41	13	90	30	10
<b>Underserved</b>	48	21	62	43	42	15	67	26	6
<b>Disabled</b>	58	14	65	42	35	12	74	23	7

Based on the broad categories of services and programs that were identified for the town meetings and that were suggested in the meetings, a list of “broad headings that can be used to categorize some library issues that could be addressed in the next few years” was presented in the survey. The “broad headings” matched the Master topic/categories that were voted upon in the town meetings. Respondents were asked to identify the three categories that they believe should be addressed by Alabama libraries in the future. The number of votes for each category is listed below.

Table 17. Priorities to be Addressed, Survey 1

<b>Master Topic/Category</b>	<b>Number of 1, 2, or 3 votes</b>
Support for libraries (including advocacy, funding, and grants)	277
Statewide services and programs (including AVL, Homework Alabama, and summer reading programs)	231
Materials (including purchase and leasing of print, non-print and electronic materials for the public's use)	230
Technology development (including expansion of computer services, new software, offering wireless internet access)	175
Marketing, public relations, and communication (to citizens about the contributions of the library to the community)	167
Collaboration and cooperation (between libraries and among libraries and other community agencies and organizations)	167
Targeted user groups (for example senior citizens, children at risk, non-English speakers)	141
Training and education of library personnel (including formal and continuing education)	137
Automation and systems (including check-out and security systems)	128
Improving library facilities, including bookmobiles	125

When the votes received on the master topics/categories in the survey are compared with those received in the town meetings (see Table 5 above), it is apparent that two items that received a substantial number of votes in the town meetings (Training & education of library personnel and Collaboration & Cooperation) were not popular choices of the survey respondents. We suggest that this may be due to several factors: first, the town meetings had greater representation from library directors and staff members with less input from users, and second, the Collaboration & Cooperation category may not have been as clearly defined on the questionnaire as it was through the interactive discussions at the town meetings.

The topic/category “Improving library facilities” was added to the questionnaire as a result of discussions at the town meetings, and therefore was not voted upon at the town meetings.

Finally, the category automation and systems received relatively few first, second or third priority votes in both the survey and the town meetings.

Survey 1 Findings on Use of Libraries: The questionnaire included a question designed to ascertain which library services were used by respondents and members of their households during the previous year. Table 18 lists the services and numbers using each. Table 19 lists the services and numbers of users of each by region.

Table 18. Library Services Used within Previous 12 Months, Survey 1

<b>Service</b>	<b>n of users</b>
Computer and Internet use	423
Alabama Virtual Library (AVL)	356
Help with research or finding information (reference)	351
Help with selection of books or other materials	336
Programs for adults	225
Summer reading for children and young adults	206
Meeting room use	185
Story hours/programs for children and young adults	147
Homework Alabama	111
Talking Books for the visually impaired	71
Bookmobile services	36
Literacy programs	31
None	20

Table 19. Respondents Indicating Library Services Used within Previous 12 Months, by Region, Survey 1

	<b>Region 1</b>	<b>Region 2</b>	<b>Region 3</b>	<b>Region 4</b>	<b>Region 5</b>	<b>Region 6</b>	<b>Region 7</b>	<b>Region 8</b>	<b>Region 9</b>
Summer reading	33	5	31	29	28	6	50	13	5
Story hours/programs for children and young adults	19	4	19	22	24	5	39	9	1
Programs for adults	34	8	40	26	31	8	53	21	4
Homework Alabama	10	8	17	13	18	6	28	7	3
Alabama Virtual Library	43	21	62	42	43	14	94	24	11
Talking Books	14	5	16	8	6	3	13	3	2
Bookmobile services	8	5	11	5	2	0	3	0	0
Computer/Internet use	58	16	79	54	48	14	108	29	6
Literacy programs	4	3	6	4	7	1	5	0	1
Meeting room use	41	9	30	19	18	6	37	17	2
Help with research (reference)	48	16	67	45	35	12	89	28	7
Help with selection of books or other materials	40	14	62	51	35	11	79	29	4
None	3	3	1	3	0	0	3	4	0

It is evident from the data that respondents to the survey use Alabama public library services to obtain information from resources both within and beyond the library walls. The top three services used were Computers and Internet, Alabama Virtual Library, and Help with research or finding information (reference).



If the categories “summer reading” and “story hours...” were combined into one category entitled “services for children and young adults” it would place third statewide in number of users. However, computer and Internet use and use of the Alabama Virtual Library would still be the services most used by respondents and their household members.

The use of library services reported here relates directly to the ranking of “Equal Access and More Access to Library Materials” as the most important priority for library services as identified through the survey. Respondents clearly value the services that they use and the recognize “access” as a very important priority for the state’s libraries.

Survey 1 Comments: Respondents to the survey were given the opportunity to make open-ended comments, and several took the opportunity. The following list indicates the most prevalent topics addressed in the comments.

- (1) Most prevalent were comments on the survey, most notably that it was hard to make choices because the library has so many important priorities and the forced choice questions required making choices. Several people complained about the overall questionnaire or specific questions on it.
- (2) Nineteen comments addressed the need for new, expanded or renovated facilities.
- (3) Fourteen comments complimented libraries, librarians, and/or APLS and the efforts made to provide good library services
- (4) Fourteen comments related to the need for additional funding for libraries.
- (5) Eight comments suggested training or development of library staff; several comments were complaints about specific staff members and the lack of a service orientation.
- (6) Seven respondents suggested that libraries needed longer open hours.
- (7) Six comments recommended more computers, better internet access, and wireless access.
- (8) Five comments related to the need for publicity and advertising of library services.
- (9) A number of comments addressed specific services or materials wanted: more audio books; more fiction; more African American audio books; more art prints; more research materials; more money for books; better fee structures; outreach to senior citizens, the handicapped, home schoolers, and others; more materials for children; more interlibrary loan services; and services for the visually impaired.
- (10) Two comments related to the priority of serving non-English speakers and suggested serving only “legal” non-English speakers and providing Spanish speaking staff but not purchasing Spanish language materials for the collections.
- (11) One comment suggested a different way of organizing the physical collection.

Full texts of the comments are available in Appendix 14.

#### PART 4. Statewide Survey of Users (Survey 2)

Purpose and Description of Survey 2: A second statewide survey was mounted online in December 2006 and ran for one month. This survey was directed specifically to users of Alabama public libraries. The survey was announced and publicized using the listserv announcements and poster-in-libraries methods described for Survey 1, above.

This survey consisted of 14 questions, six of which were demographic and eight of which were substantive. The substantive questions were designed to establish the extent to which outcome

targets associated with goals in the 2002-2007 state plan were met. The survey questionnaire is available in Appendix 14.

The survey was posted on the APLS website and administered via the survey software called SurveyMonkey. It was available from December 8, 2006, until January 5, 2007.

Participation in Survey 2: The total number of responses to Survey 2 was 421. Residents of six of the state’s larger counties (with populations of more than 50,000) contributed 72 % of the responses. Four counties were not represented by a single respondent. Table 20 summarizes the respondent counts by county.

Table 20. Respondents to Survey 2, by county

County	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses	Cumulative Percent of Responses
Mobile	122	28.9	28.9
Madison	65	15.4	44.3
Jefferson	40	9.5	53.8
Morgan	34	8.1	61.9
Baldwin	28	6.6	68.5
Jackson	15	3.6	72.1
57 additional counties	117	27.8	100
4 additional counties	0	0	100

Participants in the survey were asked the length of their residency in Alabama, their age, and their gender so that the demographics could be compared with the data in Survey 1. The gender of respondents and their ages were almost exact matches to the data from Survey 1. Tables 21, 22, and 23 summarize the results.

Table 21. Gender of Respondents, Survey 2

Gender	Percentage of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Male	17.2	70
Female	82.8	336
Total	100	406

Table 22. Length of Alabama Residence of Respondents, Survey 2

Tenure in Alabama	Percent of Respondents	Number of Respondents
Ten or more years	82	333
Six to ten years	7	27
One to five years	8	33
Less than one year	13	3.2
Total	100	406

Table 23. Age of Respondents, Survey 2

Age in Years	Percent of Respondents	Number of Respondents
46-60	33	135
31-45	32	130
Over 60	16	67
21-30	12	47
Under 21	7	27
All	100	406

In order to ascertain respondents' eligibility to answer questions regarding children's programs and services, participants in the survey were asked whether or not they had children between the ages of 4 and 18 years in the household. 138 of 406 respondents reported to have children in the household. This accounted for 34 percent of the total. The numbers of children ranged from 1 to 6, with the modal number of children at 2 (50 of 138 respondents).

Survey 2 Findings: Findings from this survey are discussed in relation to the goals in the state plan for 2002-2007 and key outcome targets established to measure progress on them. Each target is reported as having been exceeded, met, or not met.

Goal 1. Juvenile Reading Enhancement – Two outcome targets were set for this goal. These were:

- (1) 50 percent of those surveyed will indicate that they have heard of the Statewide Summer Reading Program.
- (2) Of those surveyed with children ages 4 to 18
  - a. 20 percent will indicate that they or their families have participated in the Statewide Summer Reading Program and
  - b. 8 percent will indicate that their children's reading skills have benefited from participation in library sponsored reading programs.

It is evident from the data that the two outcome targets were exceeded by a large margin.

- (1) Of 399 respondents, 354 reported to have heard about or had a household member participate in the Summer Reading Program. This represents 88.7 percent of all respondents.
- (2) Of the 138 respondents who reported having children in the household, 65.4 percent (89 respondents) had a household member who participated in the Summer Reading Program. An additional 34 respondents (25 percent) reported to have been aware of the program while having no household members participating. Less than 10 percent of the respondents with children in the home reported not to have heard of the Summer Reading Program.
- (3) Seventy nine of the 136 respondents who answered the question about benefits to their children's reading skills from participation in library programs answered in the affirmative. This represents 58.1 percent of respondents with children in the home and 19.8 percent of all respondents to Survey 2.

Goal 3. Equal Access and More Access to Information and Library Materials. Three outcome targets were established for this goal. They were:

- (1) 50 percent of those surveyed will indicate that they have heard of the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL).
- (2) 15 percent will indicate that they or their family members have benefited from the Alabama Virtual Library.
- (3) 20 percent will indicate that they or their family members use a public library at least four times a year, and
  - a. Of the library users, 50 percent will indicate that they or their family members have benefited from the library's automated system.

The target outcomes associated with equal and more access to information and library materials were exceeded by a large margin for both all respondents and for the subset of respondents who reported having children in their households.

- (1) Of 398 respondents, 240 of them (60.3 percent) reported having used the Alabama Virtual Library. An additional 24.9 percent of the respondents (99 individuals) reported being aware of the Alabama Virtual Library.
- (2) Among the respondents with children between the ages of 4 and 18 in the home, 94 of 135 respondents (69.6 percent) reported having used the Alabama Virtual Library. An additional 20 percent (27 respondents) claimed to have been aware of the Alabama Virtual Library.
- (3) Of 394 respondents, 376 (95.4 percent) reported that they or their family members used an Alabama public library four or more times per year.
- (4) Among the families with children in the home, 94.8 percent (128 of 135 respondents) reported using a library at least four times per year.
- (5) Of those 376 respondents who reported using a library four times per year, 312 (83 percent) reported that they or a household member benefited from an Alabama public library's automated system.

Additional Use Information from Survey 2. In addition to surpassing the outcome targets for two goals of the six goals in the 2002-2007 state plan for LSTA, libraries showed excellent use of libraries on other fronts. Participants in the survey were asked about holding library cards.

- (1) Of the 406 respondents to survey 2, 393 stated that they had a library card. Another 5 individuals said that although they had no library card, they used library resources. Almost 97 percent of respondents reported having a library card, and 98 percent of respondents reported using the library.
- (2) The numbers of users of specific programs, or receiving particular benefits of library use, were encouraging, and provide evidence that programs embedded within the six priority goals in the current state plan are used.
  - a. Sixty-five of 399 respondents (16.3 percent) participated or had a household member participate in a literacy skill program at an Alabama library.

- b. One-hundred and eleven of 399 respondents (27.8 percent) reported that they or someone in their household learned life coping skills through association with a library.
- c. Eight-five of 399 respondents (21.3 percent) reported that they or someone in their household took a computer-related course at an Alabama public library.

(3) Survey 2 approached the questions of whether and how people’s lives have improved through the use of Alabama libraries. Table 24 summarizes the areas for which library services were reported to have improved the lives of users.

Table 24. Areas of Life Improvement associated with Public Libraries\*

Area of Life	Number of respondents reporting improvement	Percent of all respondents reporting improvement
Personal enrichment	339	88.7
Reading skills	228	59.7
Cultural awareness	185	48.4
Community awareness	177	46.3
Skills for the workplace	137	35.9
Computer literacy	131	34.3
Parenting skills	69	18.1
Foreign language skills	59	15.4
Others	59	15.4

\* 382 responses were received; respondents selected as many areas as applied

The “other” areas for which respondents use public libraries include:

Entertainment
Financial research
Genealogy
Health information
Historical research
Hobbies
Home Schooling
How to do it resources
Research
Schoolwork
Social networking, friends
Spiritual & religious
Technology help

Entertainment was mentioned by nine respondents, and research and hobbies were both mentioned by eight. In all, 59 respondents listed purposes for using the library beyond the areas of life mentioned in Survey 2.

PART 5. Investment in Library Services under the 2002-2007 State Plan

Library directors, users, trustees, library staff members and others throughout Alabama reported their use, priorities, and preferences for public libraries through seven town meetings and two statewide surveys. An additional way to look at how well Alabama libraries have progressed toward the six goals in the current state plan is to look at the return on investment of federal LSTA funds in Alabama library programs.

Table 25 summarizes the amount and percentage of LSTA funds spent on each of the six priority areas during the period 2003-2006. The number of projects funded is noted for each goal within each year.

Table 25. LSTA Funding, 2003-2006

	<b>FY 2003</b>	<b>FY 2004</b>	<b>FY 2005</b>	<b>FY 2006</b>
Goal 1: Juvenile reading enhancement	\$176,587 7.4% 15 projects	\$209,285 8.8% 25 projects	\$311,254 12.4% 18 projects	\$403,426 15.8% 22 projects
Goal 2: Services to non-English speakers	-	\$20,000 .8% 1 project	-	\$20,000 .8% 1 project
Goal 3: Equal access and more access	\$547,939 23% 32 projects	\$775,690 32.7% 34 projects	\$800,832 31.9% 34 projects	\$864,413 33.8% 31 projects
Goal 4: Training of library staff, trustees, users	\$169,618 7.1% 2 projects	\$84,471 3.6% 2 projects	\$178,636 7.1% 3 projects	\$226,421 8.9% 3 projects
Goal 5: Services for underserved users	\$1,197,452 50.4% 37 projects	\$1,095,271 46.2% 39 projects	\$1,018,364 40.6% 39 projects	\$821,364 32.1% 24 projects
Goal 6: Services for the Disabled	\$201,771 8.5% 6 projects	\$104,268 4.4% 3 projects	\$106,279 4.2% 3 projects	\$145,795 5.7% 2 projects
Administration	\$84,153 3.5% 1 project	\$80,160 3.4% 1 project	\$92,107 3.7% 1 project	\$75,252 2.9% 1 project
Totals – Expenditures & Projects	\$ 2,377,520 93 projects	\$2,369,145 105 projects	\$2,507,472 98 projects	\$2,556,671 84 projects

A look at the total amounts invested in each goal suggests that goals 3 and 5 (equal and more access; services for underserved rural and urban users) are the top priorities for Alabama public libraries, although the costs of particular projects and services in each of the goal areas may explain the differences in expenditures in the broad categories.

For the four years for which LSTA expenditure data is available, the greatest amount has been spent in support of priority 5, Service for underserved rural and urban library users. The rankings, amounts, and goals supported are summarized in table 26.

Table 26. Total LSTA Expenditures, 2002-2005, ranked by amount

Rank by \$ spent	Goal	Amount	N of Projects
1	5. Services for underserved users	\$4,132,451	139
2	3. Equal access and more access	\$2,988,874	131
3	1. Juvenile reading enhancement*	\$1,100,552	80
4	4. Training of library staff, trustees, users	\$ 659,146	10
5	6. Services for the disabled	\$ 558,112	14
6	2. Service for non-English speakers	\$ 40,000	2

\*includes Homework Alabama, previously reported under Goal 5.

It is useful to compare the findings on several items from Survey 1 with the expenditures on the same priorities. Table 27 compares rankings from Survey 1 with expenditures of LSTA funds over the past four years.

Table 27. Comparison of Rankings, Survey 1, and Expenditures

Ranks → Goals ↓	Most votes: “best job”	Most votes: “most important”	Most votes: “needs improvement”	Most LSTA dollars invested	Most votes: “should continue as goal”
Juvenile reading	1	2	6	3	1
Equal access	2	1	3	2	2
Training	3	4	4	4	3
Disabled	4	6	5	5	4
Underserved	5	5	1	1	5
Non-English	6	3	2	6	6

The data supports the view that there is a high return on investment for programs associated with Juvenile reading enhancement, especially summer reading programs. The four-year expenditure on summer reading programs was \$127,000, a very small fraction of the entire LSTA expenditure of nearly \$10 million. The entire priority area for Juvenile reading enhancement cost only one tenth of the four-year LSTA expenditure, and yet this priority was consistently seen as a priority on which the state’s libraries do an excellent job, a priority that should continue to be addressed in the future, and a priority that was voted second “most important” by survey 1 respondents. This was an area of high visibility, with survey 2 respondents aware of summer reading programs and participating heavily in the programs. Key outcome targets were met for the Juvenile reading enhancement priority.

Equal access and more access to information and library materials was identified by survey respondents as the most important priority, and it was ranked second in terms of the importance of continuing to address the priority. This priority received the second highest expenditure of LSTA funds, with almost \$3 million allocated in 2002-2005. Technology projects that strengthen the electronic infrastructure so that citizens can access information are funded under this priority goal. The results of these expenditures are visible, with 60 percent of survey respondents reporting that they or a household member used the Alabama Virtual Library.

Technical assistance is also funded under this priority, and the “circuit rider” system was frequently mentioned in the town meetings statewide. Users reported in survey 2 that they benefited from automated systems in Alabama libraries. Libraries met key outcome targets on the Equal access priority.

Training of library staff, trustees and users was ranked fourth in importance among the six priorities in the current state plan. This priority was ranked third in the voting as to which priorities to continue to address in the future, and it also ranked third in mentions as the area in which Alabama libraries do the “best job.” User comments suggested a wide range of staff development needs, and funds are invested in workshops, continuing professional education, and graduate school for practicing librarians in the state. Library directors and staff members rate this priority as important and the expenditures, ranking fourth among the six priorities, are not questioned by those in the library community or the user community. Training, while not as visible a program as others, is valued within the community.

Service to non-English speaking people is the priority that received the least dollar expenditure over the past four years, and it is an area that is seen to be of little importance. This priority received relatively little interest from the libraries, and only two projects were funded. Total expenditure on this priority was \$40,000 over the past four years. However, this priority was ranked third for continuation in the future, and respondents to the first survey recognized that this is a priority that needs attention. Comments from some users reflected a popular sentiment: that English should be learned by newcomers and that libraries cannot (or should not) provide foreign language materials as a core service. Participants in town meetings and respondents to the first survey had mixed reactions to this priority.

Services for the disabled received the second to least funding (\$558,112) and relatively few projects were supported under this priority. This priority was ranked last in importance by survey respondents. However, there was recognition in respondent comments that this is important to some users and that it may become increasingly important as the user population ages. Outcome targets for this priority were not addressed in this study.

Service for underserved rural and urban library users was the best funded priority, with over \$4 million invested in 2002-2006. The funds were utilized for a wide range of projects – from outreach projects to book grants to bookmobile and library vehicle acquisition. Literacy projects were funded under this priority, and respondents to survey 2 indicated that reading skills were improved through their association with library services and programs. The wide variety of projects and service that come under this rubric appears to dilute the visibility of the priority among users. This priority, despite the amount of funding invested in its programs and activities, was viewed by survey respondents as having relatively low importance. We are inclined to believe that this priority has not been well understood by users and others outside the professional library community. The fact that only library directors ranked this priority above fifth in importance (among six priorities) supports the view.



## PART 6. Recommendations and Conclusions

### 1. Performance on 2002-2007 Goals

The evidence accumulated from contact with over 1000 Alabamians who are concerned with their libraries concludes that libraries have been highly successful in addressing goals 1 (juvenile reading enhancement), goal 3 (equal and more access to information and library materials), and goal 4 (training). While users report improvements in life skills and reading, they also reported more use of libraries for entertainment, research, and leisure pursuits. However, they do not identify these as associated with performance on goal 4 (services for underserved rural and urban users), the goal whose programs and activities support collections and materials.

Respondents to the three data collection vehicles described here consistently rate attention to and performance on goal 2 (service for non-English speakers) as “needing improvement.” Finally, little attention was paid to goal 6 (services for the disabled), although survey 1 respondents reported this priority to be “least important” now but still worthy of attention in the future.

### 2. Recommendations of Priorities for the Future

Goals in the 2002-2007 state plan that were viewed as appropriate for the future included goal 1 (juvenile reading enhancement) with special attention to both summer reading and Homework Alabama; goal 3 (equal and more access) with special attention to the Alabama Virtual Library and technology support; and goal 4 (training for library staff, trustees, and users).

The remaining goals were viewed by survey respondents and town meeting participants as generally less important but still worthy of attention in the future. Respondents identified goals related to special populations (non-English speakers and the disabled) as special cases, and they were not selected as high priority initiatives in the town meetings nor in the surveys. In general, there was great reluctance to abandon any of the priorities/goals set in place in 2002.

In addition to recommending retention of the priorities from the 2002-2007 state plan, participants in the process identified new priorities for the future. Those viewed as important for the future by people *in the professional library community* (library directors, staff members, and trustees) included

- Public relations, marketing, and communication of library services, library needs, and library programs. This was seen as necessary to gaining the recognition and support that libraries need.
- Collaboration, cooperation, and networking among libraries and with other community organizations, agencies and services, including schools, businesses, and other community resources. This was seen as providing opportunities for sharing resources, taking advantage of economies of scale, and better serving users.
- Library facilities. Facilities were seen as a pressing necessity in some communities, and new buildings, bookmobiles, renovations, and maintenance of present facilities were all mentioned.
- Technology. Technological solutions in the areas of resource sharing, automating processes, and improving access were identified as needs for future consideration. Statewide borrowing and other networking were mentioned in this context.

Priority needs that were identified by groups with heavy *user participation* included:

- Support for statewide special programs, including summer reading programs for children, the Alabama Virtual Library, Homework Alabama, and technology support.
- Support for materials in all formats: print, non-print, audiovisual and electronic.
- General advocacy and support for libraries, particularly from the State.
- Support for technology, computers, and internet in the libraries.
- Library facilities.

### 3. Structural recommendations for 2007-2012 state plan.

An overarching concern throughout the process of collecting data to inform the upcoming state plan was the issue of communicating what the priorities were and what we meant by certain words and phrases (such as “underserved” and “access”). While the library community understands these concepts, users are more apt to ask questions like “Who the heck are the underserved?” Thus, we make the following recommendations about the structure of priorities and goals for the next state plan.

- The separation of “administrative” from “programmatic” goals and objectives would make it easier to communicate library priorities, successes, failures, and needs with the appropriate audiences, i.e. library community (staff, directors, trustees) or users.
- Respondents to the surveys and participants in the town meetings suggested combining several current priorities under a single rubric. Services for the disabled, services for non-English speakers, and some services that have been supported for the “underserved,” might be combined under a priority of “services for special populations.” This would make the goal/priority statements both more descriptive and more informative.
- Less attention may be given by the community and by users to priorities that are viewed as narrow rather than broad and overarching. While we recognize the need to relate state priorities and goals to LSTA and state priorities, we nonetheless recommend that the priorities in the upcoming plan be stated in such a way that does not invite discrimination between the “broadly” and “narrowly” stated.

### Summary

This project, with input from over 1000 Alabamians, suggests that Alabama’s public libraries face a bright future.

The public reports broad use of the state’s public libraries while having a considerable list of programs, materials, and services they would like to have. Among those who contributed to this study, there is great enthusiasm for libraries and the changes they can make in people’s lives. At the same time, there is clear recognition that support for both Statewide and local library services are necessary. It has been said that part of marketing is having the customer understand not only a program’s successes, but its needs as well. Clearly, Alabama library users have received that message on both.

## PART V

### Progress in Showing Results of Library Initiatives or Services

**Many states have begun to measure outcomes of appropriate initiatives or to develop resources for outcome-based planning and evaluation for their constituents. If you have measured outcomes or developed other objective tools or strategies for assessing the value of library services, please describe your progress here. (Please do not use the same project that you reported in Part III above.)**

APLS used 2 online survey tools to measure both outputs and outcomes. One of these is Perseus SurveySolutions used for the first public online survey that we conducted. The other is Survey Monkey, used for a second public online survey and for a survey of library directors.

The Perseus SurveySolutions survey tool has the following features:

- Create unlimited surveys, responses, questions per survey, and emails depending on the account type you choose – without additional cost
- Easily create survey questions and responses using survey templates, a survey wizard, or a rich text editor
- Personalize the survey respondent's experience using complex skip logic, conditional branching, hidden fields, customized questions
- Draw from a rich collection of report templates – or design your own – to communicate survey results
- As a web-based application, WebSurveyor requires only a standard web browser, such as Microsoft Internet Explorer or Firefox, and an Internet connection.

Survey Monkey is a similar service provided by a company with the same name. An annual subscription costs \$200. Using just a web browser, a user can create a survey with an intuitive survey editor. The user selects from over a dozen types of questions (single choice, multiple choice, rating scales, drop-down menus, and more). Options allow the user to require answers to any question, control the flow with custom skip logic, and even randomize answer choices to eliminate bias. In addition, the user has complete control over the colors and layout of the survey. All the data can be downloaded to the user's local computer for further analysis. Summary results can be taken into Excel to create graphs, and the detail results can be saved in the user's hard drive for safekeeping.

## PART VI

### Lessons Learned

**What lessons have you learned that other States could benefit from knowing? Include what worked and what should be changed. Include assessments that compared the level of investment of time, money and other resources to the value of the result achieved.**

One of the most important things we learned was the value of online surveys. Because most people statewide can get access to the Internet at work, home, or libraries, we believe that an

online survey can get a much larger response than other survey methods, such as a mail or telephone survey.

The online survey requires little effort, time, or money compared with other data-gathering techniques. A very important element in doing an online public survey, in addition to the preparation of carefully worded survey questions, is to promote the survey through press releases, and e-mail messages explaining the survey to library directors and city, county, and state officials.

## **PART VII**

### **Brief Description of Evaluation Process**

**How was the evaluation conducted and who was involved? Include evaluator (e.g., contracted organization or individual or internal staff), methods, timetable, etc.**

The evaluation was conducted as a collaborative project of the contractor and APLS staff. APLS contracted with the School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alabama, for collection and analysis of performance data on the State's current LSTA five-year plan and on preferences, priorities and suggestions from the library community to inform the planning process for the five-year plan that will be developed by APLS to cover October 1, 2007, through September 30, 2012.

Contracted Staff: Elizabeth Aversa, Ph.D., served as principal investigator for this project. Aversa is director and professor at the School of Library and Information Studies, coming to this project with over thirty-five years experience in public and state library development, consulting, and library education. Jennifer Mathews served as project assistant. Ms. Mathews, an MLIS graduate of the School of Library and Information Studies, is currently a doctoral student in the College of Communication and Information Sciences at the University of Alabama. She is an experienced editor of both print and web-based materials, having been employed in the publishing industry for over a decade before entering graduate school.

APLS Staff: APLS consultant, Jim Smith, served as the principal coordinator to help facilitate the work of Dr. Aversa. Mr. Smith served as the LSTA Coordinator during the four years covered by this evaluation and is very familiar with the plan and with the statewide and local projects that were paid for with LSTA funds. APLS Director, Rebecca Mitchell, initiated and took part in meetings that resulted in the evaluation methodology. As the chief administrator of the agency, Ms. Mitchell communicated regularly with Dr. Aversa, oversaw the work of Mr. Smith, and attended five of the town meetings conducted by Dr. Aversa. In 2005 APLS consultant, Kelyn Ralya, began to assume many of the responsibilities of Mr. Smith, and she is also familiar with the plan and projects. She was closely involved in facilitating the work of Dr. Aversa and attended six of the town meetings.

Methodology: Three methods were used by Dr. Aversa to collect the data: a series of seven hearings that were held at different locations throughout the State; a survey that was administered to the public library community and interested citizens in the communities served

by Alabama’s public libraries; and a user survey that addressed specific performance targets in the 2002-2007 state plan. In addition, project staff reviewed documents associated with the activities supported by LSTA over the period covered by the current five-year plan.

The hearings, referenced here as “town meetings,” took place in June 2006. They provided structured opportunities for interested parties to provide input on both the achievements and shortcomings of the present plan and to make suggestions for consideration for the next five-year plan. Procedures associated with and findings from the town meetings are summarized in this report.

The first survey directed to the entire Alabama library community was made available online and in print-on-paper form throughout the month of October 2006.

The second survey of library users was made available between December 8, 2006 and January 5, 2007.

APLS staff conducted an online survey of public library directors from January 31, 2007, through February 19, 2007.

**Reporting:** This report covers the period May 2006 through January 2007. It provides summary data, interpretation, and discussion of the findings from the data collection activities and review of data on expenditures of LSTA funds during the period covered by the 2002-2007 state plan.

**Who was involved? Include stakeholders who contributed evaluation data, e.g., users of services, advisory board members, funders, policy makers, library staff, etc.**

Participants in town meetings included practicing librarians, members of library boards, municipal officials, State government officials, the LSTA Advisory Council, and local citizens. Participants in the online surveys included the general public and public library directors.

At the town meetings, by far, the greatest number of participants represented directors of public libraries. Thirty-six public library directors attended, accounting for greater than forty percent of all participants. The second most prevalent participant category was library staff, with twenty-five attendees. Finally, participants in the town meetings were distributed across several categories including citizens and governmental officials. Table 3 is a summary of participant demographics. Appendix 4 lists all participants.

Table 3. Summary of Participant Demographics

<b>Participant Category</b>	<b>Percentage of Participants</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
Library Directors	39.6	36
Library Staff	27.5	25
Library Board Members/Trustees	11.0	10
Government Officials (all levels)	11.0	10
Citizens	9.9	9
Unknown	~ 1.0	1
Total for All Categories	~100.00	91

Respondents to the first survey included library users, directors, staff members, trustees, and government officials. 605 usable responses were logged. Of the responses, 485 were received online and 120 were returned by mail. Respondents to this survey included library users, directors, staff members, trustees, and government officials. Perseus SurveySolutions ® software was used as the online data collection vehicle in this survey, and results were sent to the School's server for analysis. 605 usable responses were logged. Of the responses, 485 were received online and 120 were returned by mail.

The second survey of library users was directed specifically to users of Alabama public libraries. Survey Software SurveyMonkey was utilized. A total of 421 survey responses were received.

For the survey of public library directors 80 usable responses were logged.

**What was the cost of the evaluation? Include contract amount, value of staff time, communications, supplies, or other resources dedicated.**

Costs were as follows:

Contract with University of Alabama	\$41,620.40
Supplies	100.00
Travel	529.00
Value of staff time	12,188.32
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$54,437.72</b>

## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Invitation Letter to State Officials

The Honorable Bob Riley  
Governor of Alabama  
State Capitol  
600 Dexter Avenue  
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Governor Riley:

Subject: Town Meetings for Library Planning

The Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) is now receiving over 2.5 million dollars in federal funds each year to provide improved library service for all citizens of Alabama. This funding is allotted by Congress under the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and is administered by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Each year this money is used to fund grants to individual libraries and to fund statewide projects such as programs for children at risk, automated circulation and catalog systems, library equipment to assist the physically handicapped, Internet access, continuing education for librarians, children's summer reading programs, and collection development.

The law requires that APLS spend the funds in accordance with the goals and objectives of a five-year plan which must be accepted by IMLS. APLS is currently operating under a plan that expires on September 30, 2007, and we must prepare a new five-year plan for the years FY2008-FY2012. It is essential that APLS gather the input and concerns of Alabama citizens, library administrators, and local, state, and national leaders so that the library needs of the people can be identified and met.

To solicit this input, APLS will conduct town meetings at six locations throughout the state. Dr. Elizabeth Aversa, Director of the University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies, will be the facilitator. At the meetings attendees will generate and prioritize information needs for their communities. The information from all the meetings will then be consolidated and used to develop goals and objectives for the new plan.

You or your representative are cordially invited to attend any of the town meetings. They will be held at the following locations:

DAPHNE	Saturday, June 3	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Daphne Public Library	2607 U.S. Highway 98
HOMEWOOD	Saturday, June 10	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Homewood Public Library	1721 Oxmoor Rd.
HUNTSVILLE	Monday, June 12	1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Huntsville Main Library	915 Monroe Street

			Bldg.	
DEMOPOLIS	Saturday, June 17	10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.	Demopolis Public Library	211 E. Washington St.
MONTGOMERY	Wednesday, June 21	1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Alabama Public Library Service	6030 Monticello Dr.
CULLMAN	Wednesday, June 28	1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Cullman City Hall Auditorium	204 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ave., NE

You may wish to review the current LSTA Five-Year Plan, covering October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2007. It is located on the APLS website at [www.apls.state.al.us](http://www.apls.state.al.us). On the APLS home page, open the "Publications" section, where you will find the *LSTA Five-Year Plan*.

For your information I have enclosed an invitation that we are asking governments, libraries, and other organizations to post and redistribute to all interested parties.

If you have any questions about the meetings or the process, please do not hesitate to contact me at 213-3902. I urge you or your representative to consider participating in this town meeting process as we strive to improve library services in Alabama.

Sincerely,

Rebecca S. Mitchell  
Director



## Appendix 2. Invitation to Local Civic Officials (example)

### **Email Memo**

**TO:** County Administrators

**RE:** Alabama Public Library Service Town Meetings

The Alabama Public Library Service service has ask us to provide you the following information about meetings to be held throughout the state. Please share this information with individuals in your county that may be interested in attending.

During June 2006, The Alabama Public Library Service will meet with library and community leaders throughout Alabama to set the agenda for the development and enhancement of public library services for the next five years.

Six Library Town Meetings will give you and the citizens of your community a chance to tell what you think about public library services in Alabama, what you value in our libraries, and what services you think our libraries should provide. Your voice will be heard by those who will write the next Five-Year Plan for Library Development in Alabama. So, please, attend the town meeting most convenient for you:

DAPHNE, Saturday, June 3. 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Daphne Public Library, 2607 U.S. Highway 98

HOMEWOOD, Saturday, June 10. 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Homewood Public Library, 1721 Oxmoor Rd.

HUNTSVILLE, Monday, June 12. 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Huntsville Main Library Bldg., 915 Monroe Street

DEMOPOLIS, Saturday, June 17. 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Demopolis Public Library, 211 E. Washington St.

MONTGOMERY, Wednesday, June 21. 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Alabama Public Library Service, 6030 Monticello Dr.

CULLMAN, Wednesday, June 28. 1:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. Cullman City Hall Auditorium, 204 2nd Ave., NE

All ALABAMA Residents are Invited to Attend

Please help us assure excellent participation by posting and redistributing to all interested parties the invitation on this link:

Appendix 3. Invitation to Library Community.



June 1, 2006

**During June 2006, The Alabama Public Library Service will meet with library and community leaders throughout Alabama to set the agenda for the development and enhancement of public library services for the next five years. This is your opportunity to**

**GIVE US SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT!**

**In response to a request for a town meeting closer to libraries in the southeast section of the state, an additional meeting has been scheduled at the Houston-Love Memorial Library in Dothan. Seven Library Town Meetings will give you and the citizens of your community a chance to tell us what you think about public library services in Alabama, what you value in our libraries, and what services you think our libraries should provide. Your voice will be heard by those who will write the next Five-Year Plan for Library Development in Alabama. So, please, attend the town meeting most convenient for you.**

<b>DAPHNE</b>	<b>Saturday, June 3</b>	<b>10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Daphne Public Library</b>	<b>2607 U.S. Highway 98</b>
<b>HOMEWOOD</b>	<b>Saturday, June 10</b>	<b>10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Homewood Public Library</b>	<b>1721 Oxmoor Rd.</b>
<b>HUNTSVILLE</b>	<b>Monday, June 12</b>	<b>1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Huntsville Main Library Bldg.</b>	<b>915 Monroe Street</b>
<b>DEMOPOLIS</b>	<b>Saturday, June 17</b>	<b>10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Demopolis Public Library</b>	<b>211 E. Washington St.</b>
<b>DOTHAN</b>	<b>Monday, June 19</b>	<b>1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Houston-Love Memorial Library</b>	<b>212 W. Burdeshaw St.</b>
<b>MONTGOMERY</b>	<b>Wednesday, June 21</b>	<b>1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Alabama Public Library Service</b>	<b>6030 Monticello Dr.</b>
<b>CULLMAN</b>	<b>Wednesday, June 28</b>	<b>1:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Cullman City Hall Auditorium</b>	<b>204 2<sup>nd</sup> Ave., NE</b>

## Appendix 4. Town Meeting Participants, by location and affiliation

### **DAPHNE, June 3, 2006**

Rebecca Mitchell	APLS	
Kelyn Rayla	APLS	
Jim Smith	APLS	
Elizabeth Aversa	UA	
Jennifer Mathews	UA	
Lorie Hammond	Chickasaw	Library director
Bonnie Lee	Orange Beach	Library director
Donna Soto	Foley	Library director
Liz Reed	Robertsdale	Library director
Betty Suddeth	Fairhope	Library director
Patricia Hetzel	Atmore/Escambia Co.	Library director
Ilse Krick	Fairhope	Reference/technology
Rebecca Burt	Anniston	Trustee
Sherilyn McNally	Fairhope	Library board member
Maria Baroco	Daphne	Resident/library intern

### **HOMEWOOD, June 10, 2006**

Rebecca Mitchell	APLS	
Kelyn Rayla	APLS	
Jim Smith	APLS	
Elizabeth Aversa	UA	
Jennifer Mathews	UA	
Sue Murrell	Mountain Brook	Library director
Edith Harwell	Homewood	Library director
Pat Ryan	JCLC	Library director
Victoria Ashford	Helena	Library director
Brenda Brasley	Trussville	Library director
Deborah Fout	Homewood	Assistant director
Amanda Bonner	Hoover	Assistant director
Dona Smith	Homewood	Children's librarian
Clay Smelt	Homewood	Friends
Helen Harmon Phillips	Columbiana	Library board chairman
June Land Reaves	Oxford	City Council member

### **HUNTSVILLE, June 12, 2006**

Kelyn Rayla	APLS	
Jim Smith	APLS	
Elizabeth Aversa	UA	
Jennifer Mathews	UA	
Karen Chambers	Woodville	Library director
John Paul Myrick	Cullman	Library director
Donna Schremser	Huntsville	Library director
Mary Wallace	Huntsville	Branch library manager
Patsy Wilson	Huntsville	Branch library manager
Sue Royer	Huntsville	Deputy director
Louise Brown	Bridgeport	Assistant director
Regina Cooper	Huntsville	Assistant director

Evallou Richardson	Sheffield	Technology & media director
Teresa Kiser	Anniston	Systems librarian
Clea?? Bone	Huntsville	Acquisitions assistant
Sheila Brown	Huntsville	Acquisitions assistant
Linda Putnam	Huntsville	Acquisitions department
Stormy Dovers	Huntsville	Computer training
Donna Noojin	Huntsville	Public library
Patsy Green	Huntsville	Public library
Bobbie Lou Leigh	Sheffield	APLS board member, 5th district
Sandra Moon	Huntsville	City Council member
Phil Kitchens	Huntsville	Retired librarian/citizen
Crystal Lavender Kitchens	Huntsville	Citizen
Patsy Williams	Huntsville	Psychometrist, 35 yrs/citizen
Kittey Graf (?)	New Hope	

**DEMOPOLIS, June 17, 2006**

Rebecca Mitchell	APLS	
Kelyn Rayla	APLS	
Jim Smith	APLS	
Elizabeth Aversa	UA	
Jennifer Mathews	UA	
Marilyn Gibson	Eutaw	Library director
Lindsey Gardner	Demopolis	Library director
Kerry O. Phillips	Thomasville	Library director
Gina Wilson	Thomasville	Technology librarian
Gwynn Turner	Demopolis	Citizen
Tiffany Norris	Tuscaloosa	Reporter

**DOTHAN, June 19, 2006**

Rebecca Mitchell	APLS	
Kelyn Rayla	APLS	
Jim Smith	APLS	
Elizabeth Aversa	UA	
Dede Coe	Headland	Library director
Marian Wynn	Geneva	Library director
Stephanie Riley	Hartford	Library director
Jean Carroll	Brundidge	Library director
Sandra Holmes	Ozark	Library director
Sandy Odom	Abbeville	Library director
Gisele Garrett	Ariton	Library director
Bettye Forbus	Dothan	Library director
Gayle Clare	Opp	Library director
Rene Lester	Luverne	Library director
Julia-Ann Jenkins	Dothan	Assistant director
Mary H. Hall	Newton	Librarian
Agnes Windsor	Slocumb	Library board member

**MONTGOMERY, June 21, 2006**

Rebecca Mitchell	APLS
Kelyn Rayla	APLS

Jim Smith	APLS	
Elizabeth Aversa	UA	
Jennifer Mathews	UA	
Ethel J. Williams	White Hall	Library director
Susie Anderson	Horseshoe Bend (Dadeville)	Library director
Bernadette Roche	Montgomery	Library director
Susan Hayes	Wetumpka	Library director
Pearl Clark	Tuskegee	Librarian
Judy Tidwell	Alexander City	Librarian
Linda Sherrill	Montgomery	Librarian – AIDT
Amy O'Connor	Evergreen	Library board member
Donna Dickey	Sylacauga	APLS ex. bd. & Comer trustee
Cathy Dickerson	Union Springs	City of Union Springs
Tammy R. Lynn	Wetumpka	Citizen & bookstore owner
Maureen Womack	Mt. Meigs	Institutional librarian, dept. of youth services
Tracy Smitherman	Mt. Meigs	Dept. of youth services
Tracey Berezansky	Montgomery	ADAH
Denise Oliver	Montgomery	ASA
Hannah Sheets (??)	Montgomery	Ed. Administrator, state dept. of ed.
Gwen G. Welch	Birmingham	Mayor's office
Mark E. Dixon	Montgomery	Governor's office
Marcel Carroll	Montgomery	SLIS student

**CULLMAN, June 28, 2006**

Kelyn Rayla	APLS	
Jim Smith	APLS	
Elizabeth Aversa	UA	
Jennifer Mathews	UA	
John Paul Myrick	Cullman	Library director
Emily Tish	Oneonta	Library director
Sandy S. McCandless	Decatur	Library director
Bonnie Seymour	Anniston	Library director
Nancy Sanford	Florence	Library director
Mary K??	Cullman	Assistant librarian
Bobbie Lou Leigh	Sheffield	APLS board member, 5th district
?? Scott	Cullman	Library board member
Dean Green	Cullman	Library board member
Lesia Coleman	Cullman	Citizen/worker

## WELCOME TO THE 2006 LIBRARY TOWN MEETING

### Introduction

This town meeting has been arranged by your Alabama Public Library Service in order to gather suggestions and ideas that will affect the future of public libraries in Alabama. More specifically, we will work together today to identify, prioritize, and reach an understanding of the needs that you believe are the most important and that should be included in the State's next five-year plan.

The results of today's meeting will be communicated to the Alabama Public Library Service for consideration, along with other forms of input, as the agency plans for the future. We will develop an online survey based on the seven scheduled town meetings, and we will make that survey available to people who could not attend a meeting in person this month. The survey will be available in the early fall and its availability will be announced over the same listservs and distribution lists that were used to invite you to be with us today. In addition, we will be happy to hear from you if you think of something after we've completed today's meeting. We will be glad to receive your e-mail at the following address:

[stateplan@slis.ua.edu](mailto:stateplan@slis.ua.edu)

### Process & Ground Rules

We will conduct the meeting using the nominal group technique. You will be asked to write down your ideas about particular issues that will be introduced to your group. We will record your ideas on the flip charts in a round robin fashion until all the ideas are noted. We will discuss the ideas briefly, and then we will ask you to prioritize the suggestions and finally rate each item on its importance. We will then rank the needs/priorities from most to least importance and present the results as part of our report to APLS.

This process should allow us to identify needs and priorities in an organized and systematic fashion. We do ask that when you share your ideas you limit the length of any explanations so that all participants have an opportunity to share their ideas and that you identify yourself, your institution, and your role so that we can record that information.

We hope that you enjoy participating in this process that is so important to library planning.

## Discussion Leaders

Elizabeth Aversa, Director, School of Library and Information Studies, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL

Jennifer Mathews, Doctoral Student, College of Communication and Information Sciences, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL

## Notes and Suggestions

Appendices 6-12: Detailed suggestions and recommendations, by location.



Appendix 6. Daphne Raw Priority List

page	1s	2s	3s	priorities	1s	2s	3s
Automation & Systems			1	More Google-like search capability	2	4	
				Federated searching across databases (specifically in AVL)	5	2	
				OCLC/WorldCat		1	6
Collaboration & Cooperation		2		Schools: relationship building (at all levels)	6	2	
				Library collaboration to change things (database search options, features of automation systems)	2	6	2
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	7	1		How to get the word out about programs: flyers, newspapers, church/community bulletins	3	2	
				Statewide TV news	1	3	1
				Emphasis on FREE	3	2	2
Materials				New formats			
Programs & Services		2		Training users to select appropriate information			
Statewide Special Programs		1		Publicity campaign: What your library can do for you	7	2	2
				Tutorials for tech training	1	3	3
				Circuit riders -- very helpful			1
				Help with formalizing outcomes	1	3	3
Support for Libraries				see under Collaboration & Cooperation -- advocacy			
Targeted User Groups			1	Promote services to low-income, non-English-speaking, homeschool population(s)			
Technology Development		1		Need to try new formats of materials	2	1	1
				State-level grants for tech development		2	2
				Teaching users (esp. home users) how to better assess the quality of Internet search results	3	1	2
				Reminding Google-minded users that the library offers pre-screened databases (more authoritative sources)	2	3	2
Training & Education of Library Personnel		1	4	How to promote programs	5	2	
				How to train users to better use computers	3	3	
				Workshops or online sessions		2	2
				Training staff who don't want to admit the need for skills improvement			5
				Confronting the need for outcomes-based evaluation		2	1

## Appendix 7. Homewood Raw Priority List

page	1s	2s	3s	priorities	1s	2s	3s
Automation & Systems				Investigate feasibility of state-wide automation			
Collaboration & Cooperation			4	Partner with other community resources (e.g., churches) re: bilingual resources	11		
				Mentoring: Pairing "haves" with "have nots" (materials, services)		11	
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	9	3		Tell what libraries do!	1		
				Informing elected officials	5	1	
				Stress econ. aspect and quality of life		7	
				Tell public officials why libraries are important		2	
				State-level PR about libraries	4		1
				Spokesperson for AL libraries		1	7
Materials				Grants for updating collections			
Programs & Services				Keeping large-scale programs tailored to needs of Alabama users (e.g., summer reading)			
Statewide Special Programs		1		Smartest card (PR)	2	1	6
				Marketing campaign (professional, like Ala. Power birds)	5	2	
				Homework Alabama	4	4	3
				Expanding circuit rider program	1	4	1
Support for Libraries		3	1	State and local advocacy	10	1	
				Advocacy templates		6	3
				Mentoring programs (big libs helping small libs)	1	3	8
Targeted User Groups				Revisit summer reading -- materials not working			
Technology Development	3		3	Downloadable audio	4	1	1
				Wi-fi equipment and access	1	1	1
				Homework Alabama		3	2
				Circuit riders -- computer services liason (APLS)	1		1
Training & Education of Library Personnel		5	4	Certification (i.e., budget)	4	1	2
				Children's and youth librarians	3	3	2
				Public services to patrons and officials	2	5	1
				Advocacy templates			1
				Budget presentation training	2	1	1
				Admin/management training		1	2
				Training for Friends/trustees		1	5

Appendix 8. Demopolis Raw Priority List

page	1s	2s	3s	priorities	1s	2s	3s
Automation & Systems			1	Upgrading current systems			
Collaboration & Cooperation		1		Working together with other libraries to find sources of funding	4		1
				Working with teachers, schools		4	
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	1		1	How to sell the library within the community (government level)			
Materials	2	1		Need more \$ (for books especially)			
Programs & Services							
Statewide Special Programs				Finding/securing grants beyond LSTA	3	-	1
				Circuit riders	1	2	
				AVL -- must keep!	-	2	-
				Training for staff (not just directors)	1	-	3
Support for Libraries				Development training			
Targeted User Groups				Non-English-speaking users (multiple ethnicities) -- library use is on the horizon			
Technology Development	1	2	1	Wireless access	2	1	1
				More computers to meet users' needs	1	1	-
				Maintenance/upkeep of security/antivirus/other software	1	-	1
				More support from state (circuit riders)	-	1	2
				Web site development/maintenance	-	1	
Training & Education of Library Personnel	-	-	1	More staff development than time/resources currently allow	-	4	-
				Specifically targeted training (e.g., for children's librarians, how to do a storytelling session)	4	-	-

## Appendix 9. Dothan Raw Priority List

<b>page</b>	<b>1s</b>	<b>2s</b>	<b>3s</b>	<b>priorities</b>	<b>1s</b>	<b>2s</b>	<b>3s</b>
Automation & Systems	-	-	2	STARS/OCLC cataloging	7	3	1
				Web development	2	7	2
				Security	2	1	8
Collaboration & Cooperation	1	1	1	STARS ILL	6	-	5
				Avenues for funding/sharing info	3	5	3
				Sharing programs/services sources (county agent, comm. Development, H&R Block, Police, EMA, fire/rescue, DHR, health dept)	2	6	3
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	1	-	1	Training in telling library story/explaining needs/FUNDRAISING (public info)	4	3	2
				Media assistance	4	2	2
				Media/PR consulting	1	2	4
				Area "chit-chat"/networking/mentoring	2	4	3
Materials	2	-	1	Children's mini-grants	3	2	5
				Downloadable audio/e-books	1	5	4
				Support for core/basic ref. materials, tech books, nonfiction	6	2	2
Programs & Services	-	1	3	SLP Assistance/manual/supplies/printing	7	5	-
				Public/user ed. In technology	5	7	-
Statewide Special Programs	2	4	-	Homework Alabama	5	2	4
				AVL	2	3	3
				Circuit riders	4	2	1
				APLS "handholding"	-	1	2
				Consultants (all types)	-	3	2
Support for Libraries	4	2	1	Infrastructure issues	5	2	3
				Buildings -- consulting and funding	1	6	1
				Basic funding without local support	5	2	2
				ID funding sources	2	2	4
				ID prog. sources	-	2	3
Targeted User Groups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Technology Development	1	3	1	Upgrades	1	7	2
				Equipment (hardware and software)	8	2	-
				Wi-fi	1	1	8
Training & Education of Library Personnel	1	1	3	Technology awareness	6	-	1
				Funding issues	2	4	3
				Board training	1	2	2
				Contacting potential benefactors	1	2	-
				Programming resources	-	2	4

## Appendix 10. Montgomery Raw Priority List

page	1s	2s	3s	priorities	1s	2s	3s
Automation & Systems		3	1	Statewide network infrastructure	12	1	
				Solinet/OCLC networking	1	12	
Collaboration & Cooperation			4	Partnering with clubs, businesses, gov't (everybody)	8	3	
				Using/sharing resources with other state libraries/agencies	3	4	6
				Work with schools, Boys and Girls Clubs		1	3
				Distance learning collaborations	2	5	4
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	2		1	Selling the library to people who control the \$\$	9	2	
				Selling it to the community	1	4	4
				Communicating resources and services available within state public libraries	3	5	3
				Informing non-English speakers about the library		1	3
				Funds appeals (plate, box on tax forms)		1	2
Materials	2	2	1	Electronic resources in languages other than English	1	4	8
				Assessing usefulness of databases and other electronic information	3	6	4
				Funds to update materials	8	3	2
Programs & Services	1			Bookmobile as way to reach non-English speakers	4	9	
				ILL	9	3	1
Statewide Special Programs	2	1		Statewide network infrastructure	6	2	1
				Recruitment of bilingual staff	1	5	
				Centralized listserv page	1	2	1
				AVL full-text only		1	1
				Continue AVL, Homework Alabama, Learn-a-Test	5	2	3
				Funding for ILL postage	1	4	2
Support for Libraries	2	1		Facilities	9	2	2
				Foundations	4	5	3
				Citizen involvement		5	7
				License plates			
				APLS director initiatives		1	1
Targeted User Groups	2	1	1	Non-English speakers	1	3	3
				Children as inroad to parents	7		1
				Middle school students	3	6	2
				Teens	2	3	
				At-risk youth (Dept. of Youth Services)	4	1	1
				Disabled users	1		1
				Seniors		1	4
Technology Development		2	2	Non-English resources	2	7	4
				Distance education	9	3	1
				Hearing aid hardware for reference desks (adaptive technology)	2	1	9
Training & Education of Library Personnel	2	3	3	Facilities planning	3	2	1
				Bilingual training		1	3
				Certification	3	2	1
				AVL training	1	2	1
				Distance education	4	4	2
				Recruiting	2	2	4

Appendix 11. Huntsville Raw Priority List

page	1s	2s	3s	priorities	1s	2s	3s
Automation & Systems	1	2	1	Get all libraries automated	11	3	-
				Common automation system	1	4	1
				Downloadable e-books, audio books	1	2	2
				Translation services	-	1	2
				Migration services	-	1	1
				Statewide digitization	1	2	4
				Wi-fi = money and security	3	7	3
				RFID	1	-	5
Collaboration & Cooperation	1	-	-	Advocate for other types of libraries/leg. Priority	-	10	2
				PR modules should be spread throughout communities	11	-	-
				Sharing information and programs/collaborate for staff development	3	2	8
				Partnering with other agencies for serving dropouts and jobouts	-	2	2
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	15	-	2	Libraries open to all, not scary	1	1	-
				Statewide PR campaign (economic benefits, availability of services, disaster planning/recovery)	13	-	1
				Customizable PR for locals, regionals	1	6	5
				APLS web site update	1	3	5
				Image: consistent, broad identity/message (access to info for all, EXPERTISE) -- need to define and promote it	3	5	3
				Documenting impact on communities	1	2	3
Materials	1	-	4	Statewide contracts for materials	14	2	-
				Downloadable materials (e-books, mp3s)	2	10	5
				Maintenance of media collections	-	4	11
Programs & Services	-	1	-	Summer reading -- teen program in particular, also needs specific attention to nonreaders	12	2	2
				Summer program for adults (and senior adults)	6	10	2
				Book sales	-	4	12
Statewide Special Programs	-	5	4	Take action against cert. without degrees -- get m.s. in school libs	2	3	2
				PR and public info campaign	7	3	1
				Set stronger minimum standards for libraries (core competency, required for funding) and FUND it	7	2	3
				Revisit library establishment conditions and requirements	-	2	6
				Statewide coordination of summer programs	-	1	2
				Servers and software for digitization of archival materials	5	1	2
				Support for wireless	-	-	1

				Resource bank -- letting people in Library A know what opportunities Library B offers, what services are available	-	5	2
Support for Libraries	1	7	-	Advocate cooperation for economic development	8	1	1
				Advocacy for \$\$ (statewide pay scale)	4	5	2
				Grantwriting assistance (workshops, individual)	-	4	1
				LSTA support RFID, wireless	-	2	7
				Friends interaction/networking	1	2	1
				Needs of small libraries	2	1	3
Targeted User Groups	-	-	4	Unemployed/high school dropouts who need job or educ. training -- opportunity to collaborate with training providers	9	1	5
				Rural users with literacy concerns	2	10	3
				Teens, families/young parents	5	6	7
Technology Development	-	2	3	Training at regional libraries (led by circuit riders)	9	3	2
				Computer-training module for staff to train users	1	6	6
				Universal Internet access across state (high speed)	6	4	2
				Safe and secure wireless access	2	3	7
Training & Education of Library Personnel	-	2	1	APLS workshops offered in places other than Montgomery	12	2	1
				Additional means for MLIS acquisition	-	8	4
				Internship funding (IMLS)	2	6	3
				Intellectual property advisement	-	1	7

Appendix 12. Cullman Raw Priority List

page	1s	2s	3s	priorities	1s	2s	3s
Automation & Systems				Statewide automation system (scaled)			
Collaboration & Cooperation	2		1	Redefining "library" and selling the idea to users, leaders, educators, other librarians	5		2
				Library as unique community center: meeting place, archive, reading and learning	2	4	1
				Partnering with community groups to host events, programs	2	1	4
Marketing, Public Relations & Communication	2	2		Selling the library to non-users (community)	1	3	3
				Selling it to community leaders/decision makers	2	4	1
				Promoting public libraries as economic catalysts	4		3
Materials	1		1	Electronic materials			
Programs & Services				Outreach to underserved user groups (of all sorts)	5	1	1
				Adult reading programs	2	3	2
				Multimedia events (film series, etc.)		3	4
Statewide Special Programs	2	1	2	Circuit riders	1	1	2
				AVL, Homework Alabama, similar programs	1	2	3
				Summer reading program		1	1
				Certification/required degree (directors) -- CPLA (national level)			
				Help promoting services and materials (publicity)	1		1
				ROI study -- show economic impact of libraries	2	1	
				Web site development			
				STARS/OCLC	1	1	
				Incentives to adhere to state standards	1	1	
Support for Libraries		1	2	Entrepreneurial training		2	2
				Forum for handling hot-button issues (e.g., non-English speakers)	3		1
				Development of small libraries		2	3
				Construction of facilities	4	2	
				Matching grants (2:1) for materials and technology		1	1
Targeted User Groups		2		Facilities for disabled users (new and upgrades)	1	3	3
				Non-English speakers: communication and feedback from users, general public	4		3
				Senior/older readers	2	5	
Technology Development		1		Digitization	5	1	
				Updating/upgrading software	1	5	
Training & Education of Library Personnel			1	Staff-level and trustee training (not just for directors)	2		1
				Entrepreneurial skills	2	2	2
				How to handle non-English issues	1	1	2
				Marketing/PR skills	2	4	
				How to identify partners (and maintain partnerships)			1



**Here is your opportunity to have a voice in the future of Alabama libraries!**

**In order to process your questionnaire, we need to know some things about you. Please be assured that your responses will not be identified as yours and that all data will be reported in the aggregate.**

**Please identify yourself as one of the following:**

- Library director
- Library staff member
- Library trustee
- Library user
- Other (please explain):

**In which Alabama county do you reside?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**How long have you been an Alabama resident?**

- Less than one year
- One to five years
- Six to ten years
- More than ten years

**To which age group do you belong?**

- Over 60
- 46-60
- 31-45
- 21-30
- Under 21

**Please identify yourself as one of the following:**

- Male
- Female

**Optional information:**

Name:

Address:

E-mail:

---

**By answering the following questions, you will tell the Alabama Public Library Service about the priorities and plans you would like to see for your libraries.**

**The six program areas listed below were identified as priorities in the 2002 state plan for Alabama libraries. Which do you believe are the most important and the least important? Rank the priorities from 1 to 6, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important.**

- Juvenile reading programs
- Service for non-English-speaking people
- Equal and more access to library materials
- Training of library staff, trustees, and users
- Services for underserved
- Service for people with disabilities

**Select the one program area in which you believe Alabama libraries are doing the best job.**

- Juvenile reading programs
- Service for non-English-speaking people
- Equal and more access to library materials
- Training of library staff, trustees, and users

- Services for underserved
- Service for people with disabilities

**Select the one program area in which you believe Alabama libraries need the most improvement.**

- Juvenile reading programs
- Service for non-English-speaking people
- Equal and more access to library materials
- Training of library staff, trustees, and users
- Services for underserved
- Service for people with disabilities

**A new five-year state plan for Alabama libraries will be written in 2007. Which of these priorities should continue to be high-priority programs in the future? [Check all that apply.]**

- Juvenile reading programs
- Service for non-English-speaking people
- Equal and more access to library materials
- Training of library staff, trustees, and users
- Services for underserved
- Service for people with disabilities

**The following is a list of services and programs that are offered by Alabama libraries. Check those that you or members of your household have used within the past 12 months. [Check all that apply.]**

- Summer reading for children/young adults
- Story hours/programs for children/young adults
- Programs for adults
- Homework Alabama
- Alabama Virtual Library (AVL)
- Talking books for the visually impaired
- Bookmobile services
- Computer and Internet use
- Literacy programs
- Meeting room use

- Help with research or finding information (reference)
- Help with selecting books or other materials
- None of the above

**Rank the library services listed below according to their importance to your community. List your most important priority as 1 and your least important as 10.**

- Summer reading for children/young adults
- Story hours/programs for children/young adults
- Programs for adults
- Homework Alabama
- Alabama Virtual Library (AVL)
- Talking books for the visually impaired
- Bookmobile services
- Computer and Internet use
- Literacy programs
- Meeting room use

**Listed below are broad headings that can be used to categorize some library issues that could be addressed over the next few years. Please identify 3 categories that you believe should be addressed. [Check only 3.]**

- Automation & Systems, including check-out and security systems, and statewide systems for collection management and circulation
- Collaboration & Cooperation between libraries and among libraries and other community agencies and organizations
- Marketing, Public Relations & Communication to citizens and public officials about the contributions of the library to the community
- Materials, including purchase and leasing of print, non-print, and electronic materials for the public's use
- Statewide Services & Programs, including the AVL, Homework Alabama, summer reading programs
- Service for Targeted Populations, for example, senior citizens, children at risk, non-English-speaking people
- Technology Development, including expansion of computer services, providing new software in computer labs, offering wireless Internet access
- Training and Education of Library Personnel, including formal education and continuing education for librarians and library staff

- Improving Library Facilities, including bookmobiles
  - Improving Support for Alabama Libraries, including advocacy, funding, and grants
- 

**Some priority areas have primarily administrative applications, while others impact patrons directly. For example, a new automated cataloging system might make it easier for library staff to prepare materials for public use. On the other hand, providing a computer lab in the library will directly serve users.**

**Keeping these distinctions in mind, please tell us how important is it to you that your library...**

**...Provide high-tech services, such as wireless connectivity and downloadable reading materials.**

Very important    Somewhat important    Not important    No opinion

**...Have automated systems such as security and automatic check-out of materials.**

Very important    Somewhat important    Not important    No opinion

**...Provide materials in languages other than English.**

Very important    Somewhat important    Not important    No opinion

**...Provide remote services such as bookmobile or books by mail.**

Very important    Somewhat important    Not important    No opinion

**...Participate in statewide programs such as Homework Alabama and the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL).**

Very important    Somewhat important    Not important    No opinion

**...Provide programs and services to children and young adults.**

Very important    Somewhat important    Not important    No opinion

**...Provide programs and services for senior citizens and other adult groups.**

Very important    Somewhat important    Not important    No opinion

**...Advertise the services and programs available at Alabama public libraries.**

Very important  Somewhat important  Not important  No opinion

**...Provide continuing education opportunities for library staff.**

Very important  Somewhat important  Not important  No opinion

**...Extend services through new libraries or new branch libraries in your city or county.**

Very important  Somewhat important  Not important  No opinion

**...Serve people who are economically or educationally disadvantaged.**

Very important  Somewhat important  Not important  No opinion

**...Have a larger budget from local taxes.**

Very important  Somewhat important  Not important  No opinion

**...Have additional funding from state-level sources.**

Very important  Somewhat important  Not important  No opinion

**...Collaborate with educational institutions and services in the community.**

Very important  Somewhat important  Not important  No opinion

**...Collaborate with civic, economic development, or cultural agencies in the community.**

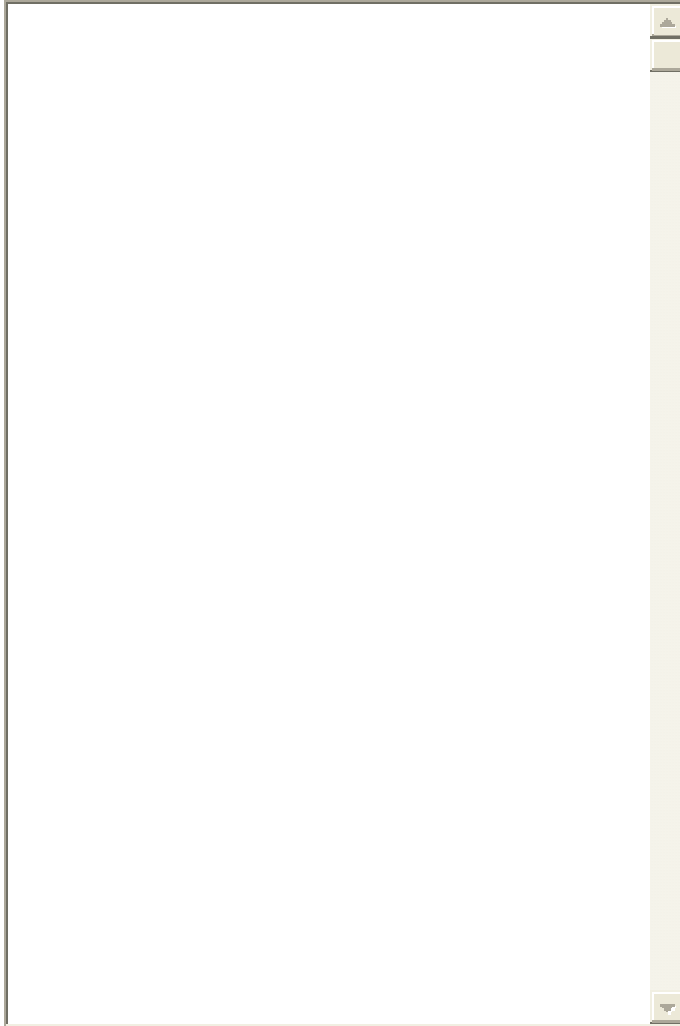
Very important  Somewhat important  Not important  No opinion

**Please indicate which of the following issues are the 5 most important concerns for your public library. [Check only 5.]**

- Providing high-tech services, such as wireless connectivity and downloadable reading materials
- Having automated systems such as security and automatic check-out of materials
- Providing materials in languages other than English
- Providing remote services such as bookmobile or books by mail
- Participating in statewide programs such as Homework Alabama and the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL)

- Providing programs and services to children and young adults
- Providing programs and services for senior citizens and other adult groups
- Advertising the services and programs available at Alabama public libraries
- Extending services through new libraries or new branch libraries in your city or county
- Serving people who are economically or educationally disadvantaged
- Having a larger budget from local taxes
- Having additional funding from state-level sources
- Collaborating with educational institutions and services in the community
- Collaborating with civic, economic development, or cultural agencies in the community
- Provide continuing education opportunities for library staff.
- None of these is the most important concern for my library.

**Please use this space to make any comments or suggestions.** You may continue on the back if necessary.



Thank you very much for completing this survey. Your opinions will help shape the future of Alabama public libraries.

**Return to: StatePlan, SLIS, Box 870252, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0252**



## Appendix 14. Comments, Survey 1, by Respondent Category

Comments in this Appendix have been edited so that respondents cannot be identified. Errors in spelling, grammar, and usage were not corrected. Where proper names or identifying information was removed, “[blank]” was inserted. A complete file of the comments is archived.

### Comments from Library Directors, Survey 1

Everything on this survey is of importance to small town libraries. We need aall the extra help we can get from state and federal sources. The AVL is such a good resource for us. Don't stop -- add more.
I appreciate the support of the staff of APLS in helping smaller libraries such as ours.
I feel that the libraries are an instrumental facility to the community and appreciate the services that Alabama Public Library Service continue to provide to help us stay up to date and improve our services to the community.
I'm not sure I understand the meaning of "provide equal or more access to library materials. " Everyone coming to our library gets equal access to materials though some materials are available only within the library since they are materials we could not replace. Am I missing something?Sorry.
It is very important that the consultants at APLS are knowledgeable, visit the libraries they are assigned and able to provide an accurate picture of Alabama libraries. Assistance with building programs i. e. space utilization and construction seems to be a weakness of the agency. APLS needs to develop a PR program (generic) for public libraries in the state. Perhaps this should be done for various sizes of libraries:1 person, small, medium, large, county systems, etc. Blind and Physically Handicapped Services are not publicized enough. The BPH newsletter should be available in electronic format and provided to every public library in the state.
It was very difficult to make choices in some catagories!It is imperative that the state agency continue to provide state aid for materials for many small libraries but technology funds are also very important. Our area doesn't need materials in other languages YET but know we will. We need construction funds desperately but aren't able to give up materials funding for it and we are lucky enough to live in a municipality that funds our library very well!
- Library needs professionally trained librarian and more open access to computers.
No additional comment
Our - Public Library needs much more money for the purchasing of books. I used the library many, many times while pursuing my Masters degree and feel this is also very important.
Our library needs more funds for staff salaries, books, and programs to be ready for a greatly needed space expansion.
So many issues are "very important;" this will make prioritizing difficult.
We are always running on a shoestring budget. We need new carpet and could use more room by adding onto our library. There are no salary increases in the future because we don't have the funding. The county should also provide an insurance and retirement program for the library director.
We must do more publicity, even if we pay for it ourselves. People just don't know what we have and what we do.
We need Federal Funds/grants for library construction.
Which is item5? None are numbered!

Comments from self-identified "Others," Survey 1

<p>The Alabama Virtual Library is one of the most important services that is offered to our citizens - students and adults. It offers a tremendous resource to all regardless of an individual's socio-economic standing.</p>
<p>This survey sort of lead the patron through some options that are not worded appropriately. I believe that if the funding and efforts go toward making the library usable for patrons (including disabled), the advertising will take care of itself. Where there are opportunities, the public does word-of-mouth advertising. Literacy programs are highly valuable in our society, but the literacy programs ought to not take away from the central goal of the public library of providing resources free of charge from a wide variety of sources (college libraries, inter-library loans, Internet, etc. ). Literacy programs maybe partly funded by the library, but should be mostly funded by the communities themselves and non-profit organizations and churches. Otherwise, materials are not purchased, equipment and facilities are left in bad repair, and staff are not fully trained to be the powerhouse of information that we have come to expect from America's public libraries. Libraries should focus programs toward using the materials included in the library:children's reading programs, making materials available to remote locations through bookmobiles, mail loans, and opening new facilities. The AVL and Homework Alabama is truly in keeping with these goals. Disabilities of concern to the public library system would be blindness and wheelchair-bound or hearing impaired. Other disabilities could be helped through the community (andn funded by the community) by using the meeting rooms for their support group meetings. Obviously, a larger budget allows for more opportunities, training, and equipment/facilities. The funding should be on all three levels for the American public library is a federal concern, a state pride, and a community responsibility and should be funded that way. Where local communities are rural or remote or poor/needly, federal and state funds should help focus the money toward the needs most present in that community:literacy, free Internet, children's reading programs and activities, and quality books. As far as advertising, the Friends of the Library needs to advertise more (personal funds here) so that more donations will come to the library more often, thus relieving the library of having to always purchase brand new books. They should also help relieve staff by using the Friends of the Library for volunteerism (senior citizens, teens, etc. ). Security is obviously a concern for the monitoring of secluded areas for loitering or child-stalking. But there are many measures many libraries around the country are doing that do not require extra funds, but just wiser placement of furniture and practices. Parking lots, after that, would be the primary need for extra security in high-risk areas. In short, the libraries need to lean heavily on the community in non-tax ways (volunteerism, donations, advertising, maintenance) and place more responsibility on the people within the community to make their library what they want it to be by activism and support other than simply financial. That would release funds to go directly to what cannot be had by any other means. The state of the library is a true marker for the intellectual character of any state or community. It shouldn't rely merely on money. By providing inter-library communications (without or with little charge) rural areas within Alabama can access the same quality mateirals and services as more wealthy communities such as Huntsville or Birmingham or Montgomery or Mobile.</p>
<p>The late fees are reculous. All the library's In Indiana have great policies an overdue material. People have only to pay for damaged or lost materials. No Fee's were charged as long as the materials were returned.</p>
<p>Because I am an academic librarian, I very rarely use the services provided through my public library (with the exception of the AVL databases). I feel strongly that the Alabama Virtual Library is a wonderful service that, unfortunately, most Alabamians know NOTHING about. This should change. There should be an ad campaign targeted to adults about what the AVL can do for them. In addition, continuing education of library staff should be a high priority. As technology continues to change, libraries and library staff need to be able to keep up with it in order to make libraries relevant to the people in their communities.</p>
<p>Improve employee attitudes and attention to patrons rather than to personal phone conversations at service desks. Some staff need to smile and project an attitude that they are there to assist patrons. The circulation desk at the main branch is my least favorite place in that building. Increase the number of computers for specifically accessing the OPAC and AVL databases at the main branch. Do more promotion of the AVL databases and training sessions on the databases. I talk to too many people who are totallyunfamiliar with AVL, and public libraries are the most likely place they'll hear about AVL. AVL is a great resource for all age groups. As an academic librarian, I see far too few students who've even heard of AVL much less know how to effectively search the databases. Perhaps the public and school libraries could partner to increase awareness and searching skills. We're fortunate to have access to so many databases through AVL. A number of other states are not so generous in their support of similar systems.</p>

<p>Non-English services are fine IF provided to those who are "LEGALLY" in this country!</p>
<p>I think it is very important to be sure that all of the branch libraries in the system have greater access to varied and new materials. I realize that total equality in this area is not the ideal, however, my use of one of the smaller branch locations has taught me that almost everything I want to read has to come from somewhere else. The problem I see with this is that many, many times I am tempted to read a particular book by the display or the cover and if the item is not seen by people in a certain area, of course, they will not use or request it. Please do not consider this a negative comment; it is intended as a positive suggestion.</p>
<p>IMPROVING SERVICES FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED AS WELL AS PEOPLE WHO ARE OTHERWISE HANDICAPPED IS A VERY IMPORTANT ISSUE. LITERACY BEGINS WHEN CHILDREN ARE YOUNG. THE MORE PROGRAMS THAT ARE AVAILABLE TO THEM THE BETTER. I HAVE MANY "COLLEGE EDUCATED" YOUNG PEOPLE WORKING AROUND ME AND THEIR ABILITY TO WRITE AND SPEAK PROPER AMERICAN IS APPALLING. TEACHING SPANISH-SPEAKING IMMIGRANTS TO SPEAK AMERICAN SHOULD BE A HIGHER PRIORITY THAN PROVIDING READING MATERIALS IN THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE. IF THEY ARE GOING TO LIVE HERE , THEY NEED TO ASSIMILATE BY LEARNING THE LANGUAGE. I SPEAK THEIR LANGUAGE WHEN I GO TO SPANISH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES. IF THEY ARE GOING TO LIVE HERE PERMANENTLY, THEY NEED TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE.</p>
<p>Work with librarians, teachers, &amp; administrators in poor/rural areas of Alabama to help them make Homework Alabama and the AVL more available to children attending schools where books and computers are not plentiful and available to everybody.</p>
<p>I would like to see a new branch in the western area [blank], where there is so much growth.</p>
<p>The [blank] Public Library is a small branch in the [blank] County Library system. We are at a great economical disadvantage because we cannot keep up with the expense of all the technical advances that we are required to incorporate. Our funding is inadequate on every level. We would like to see less emphasis on technology and more on seeing that the basic services are adequately funded.</p>

Comments from Library Staff Members, Survey 1

<p>It seems that it would be responsible use of taxpayer money to recover long overdue and disappeared materials- even to prosecute or collect big fines for long overdue items.</p>
<p>All of the above are important, it is hard to pick just five.</p>
<p>All of the above listed concerns are extremely important to libraries. . . . . so it was very hard to pick just five!</p>
<p>As always money makes the difference. The more funds we have the more improvements the library can make and the more patrons they can serve. Thank you</p>
<p>Collaborations, statewide services allow for more efficient use of dollars. Providing resources/computers, etc for the underserved helps improve the quality of life for all. Having adequate funding to provide programs for early learners is a must for foundation building. More attention must also be given to the aging boomers who will require more viable programs and services. Boomers will be a large percentage of population.</p>
<p>I am concerned with the increase of quiet censorship I've seen in the last few years. Pressure from the library board and various local contributors has been bowed to and suggestions made to remove an entertainment newspaper. A web page was removed for the same reasons, and the books being discarded due to 'lack of interest' are mostly liberal in topic. Magazines added by board suggestion have been extreme right wing. The science database was cut from AVL about the same time as science books were being discarded from the youth area.</p>
<p>I appreciate all that the libraries in Alabama and [blank] in particular do. The library is a very important part of my community.</p>
<p>I believe that holding staff accountable for core competencies and customer service proficiency and that marketing the broad value of libraries to citizens and officials are the two greatest steps toward improved government and corporate support from which improved services will follow. I'd love to see an engaging television ad campaign to introduce library services to those who don't visit libraries.</p>
<p>I cannot emphasize enough that the Libraries in Alabama, both on the State and Local level do not advertise available services adequately. I encounter patrons that really do not know what all we have to offer, either locally obtained or provided by the state. We have collections in our Cooperative that most patrons know nothing about. The database programs both local and AVL seem to be under utilized. I believe that we need to do more to promote and to educate the public in these areas. We also do not need to run a promotion campaign once and then think that we have reached everybody or that everybody will remember. If that was all that was needed, then Corporate America would not continue spending millions of dollars to advertise products that have been on the market for years.</p>
<p>I do not think an automated self/check out line is a good thing, nor do I think an automated phone service is necessarily best. . . We need more person to person contact, not less. . . The world is already much too frustrating to deal with, as it seems contact with an actual human being is hard to find at most companies and/or businesses. . . I, for one, would much rather interact and speak to a real living, breathing human being, rather than push 1 for this and do it myself check-outs at the grocery store or the library. . . Thank you. . .</p>
<p>I feel that this library is doing a great job serving our community. SO many people compliment and look forward to coming to our library. We live in a rural area and the services this library offers are very important.</p>
<p>I feel that we are getting way from what the library is about, which is providing information for educational and/or pleasure, and focusing to much on stats. It should not be about how many hrs or days of the week we HAVE to be open to qualify for Standards, but the QUALITY of service that is given, even if you're only opened for a few hours a day or 7 days a week.</p>
<p>I found this survey to be difficult to fill out. It's hard to determine what is more important to the library and the community by assigning it a number. Some things, like providing for the disabled and the economically and educationally disadvantaged is something the library has always done, and I would argue that most of the patronage come from this area of the community. However, there are weaknesses. The non-English speaking community is growing; I feel this is a sign of great prosperity and more services and PROGRAMS should be provided so that the community can begin to feel more integrated. More cohesive. I also think there should be more collaboration with Middle Schools and High Schools, equal to the outreach provided to Elementary schools. Ultimately I feel the purpose of a library is to help strengthen the community, and since communities constantly change and grow, libraries need to do all they can to be ahead of the game. Open-mindedness and</p>

the knowledge that library work is extremely important to all people and every community is crucial. I hope some of the things I have mentioned will help when those big decisions are being made. Thank you for the opportunity to share my opinions.

I haven't followed the rules quite. I've changed answers depending on "concern", "importance" etc. And, "more and better access to library materials" seems to cover some of the other choices which were given. Stable funding is the overriding concern.

I think the [blank] Public Library does wonders with the given budget; however, the library and its users deserve a much larger budget allocation. I am a frequent user, and I see a wide cross-section of the community on my trips to the library. I would love to see a much larger materials budget and an increase in purchasing of nonfiction. I'll close with a recent news announcement: Lack of Funding, Maintenance and Upgrades Threaten Services— Second Digital Divide Could Emerge A new national report reveals that 99 percent of all U. S. public libraries provide free public access to computers wired to the Internet, compared to 5 percent 10 years ago. Librarians overwhelmingly (71 percent) report that the most important impact of this service is providing Internet access to those who otherwise would not have it. This is the first time that impact has been quantified on a national scale. The report also reveals that despite increased demand for library computers, libraries typically have not seen a corresponding increase in budgets and many are challenged to provide enough computers or fast-enough connection speeds to meet demand. The study, "Public Libraries and the Internet 2006," was conducted by the Information Use Management and Policy Institute at Florida State University and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the American Library Association.

I would like for all Alabama public libraries to have their holdings listed on WorldCat. It would make it easier to request interlibrary loan materials from neighboring libraries.

It is regrettable that the Homework Alabama program was not designed to help young people who had the greatest need, who probably had no access to computers at home where they needed the help.

It was difficult to rank the priorities in one of the first questions, as all seem vital to our libraries, and of equal importance to me both as a member of the community and as a library staff member.

It was hard to make the choices all are important.

It was hard to tell if the questions were to be answered as they applied to me as an individual or to the library that I use/work at.

Libraries need good PR as most of the population has no idea what is available in libraries and how much is done with so little. The Alabama Public Library Service is essential to the

Need a new library

Need more African American Audio Books and programs with authors.

Our library has had level funding or near level funding for a number of years now so I would have to say that marketing the library to the community in a way that would result in improving that funding must be our top priority.

Our library is desperately in need of more space to better serve our patrons. Especially needed is more space for children and young adult programming.

Public libraries additionally need help with advocacy with local governments, so they can secure the funding needed not just for materials but for new libraries, security systems, and needed technology, which are all areas of neglect for my library system due to lack of funding, even though we are sitting in [blank].

Services for senior citizens is going to become more and more important in the coming years as America and Alabama grays. Whether we are proactive or reactive will tell the story of the library's importance to the children who have grown up with library services - since birth to death is how we sell ourselves.

Staff should not only have greater professional development opportunities, I also feel broader training and fuller utilization of our skills would be beneficial to the libraries and the tax payers.

Thank you for the time it took (& will take) to organize this survey -- I look forward to seeing the results. Best of luck!

The baby boomers are now reaching retirement age and they are a large group of individuals that libraries need to focus on.

The reason I have selected additional funding rather than collaborating with educational institutions, high tech services, adult programming, etc. is because I believe if we had a larger budget we would be able to provide all of these things for our patrons. Unfortunately, things can't be done without money.

The use of public libraries have always been important to me. Whatever can be done to keep libraries functioning in our communities I will gladly do and assist in any way.
THERE HAS BEEN A FIVE YEAR WAIT FOR THE LIBRARY TO BE MOVED BACK TO DOWNTOWN FOR THE [blank] LIBRARY. PATRONS ASK FOR IT EVERY DAY AND ASK WHY IT IS TAKING SO LONG. [blank] COMMUNITY NEEDS THEIR LARGER AND NEWER LIBRARY TO BE QUICKLY FINISHED.
There is a need for building grants. Technology is great, but you need the physical building to support the technology.
to my opinion starts it all I glad to give my suggestion.
Unless there is more funding for smaller libraries. The library will be unable to pay its trained staff a salary so the trained staff will be able to stay(economically) at that particular library. Small libraries are losing excellently trained and educated staff due to poor and unsatisfactory staff salaries.
We need more money for more, better paid staff to better serve our patrons!!!!
Your survey will get more responders if you shorten it.

Comments from Trustees, Survey 1

<p>I don't believe that the library has a mandate to become a social services agency. It should promote &amp; encourage &amp; facilitate the literacy of a given community. Schools educate and social service agencies help the unfortunate. Libraries are available to help those who are able to &amp; willing to take advantage of the resources that are available.</p>
<p>It is thrilling to see the improvements that have been made to [blank] Public Library in the recent years. May we continue to serve the public where needs are present.</p>
<p>More attention must be focused on training users on every service provided by the library and marketing the services available at the library. The library staff must come from behind the desks and seek out patrons who may need attention.</p>
<p>Need more efficient interlibrary loan</p>
<p>Our major need is more personnel, and additional space. It is hard to keep up with the growth in [blank] County. A compliment I must pass on is that we have just returned from a month long trip to New England. I was constantly underimpressed with their libraries. We can be very proud of our libraries in Alabama.</p>
<p>Our most important concern is dependable funding for operating cost. If you have to depend on the whims of a city council it is difficult to plan new services when you're trying to keep your head above water. Just as school systems splitting cuts into funding, giving small communities a cut in state funding makes it almost impossible to maintain a larger library. Even with staff development furnished by the state, we still have to pay substitutes[?] and milage[?]. --or close the library, which we will not do. Verting[?]-seems no matter how hard we try, just as we think we're making ends meet, here comes another cut.</p>
<p>We only have a limited number of families that are non-English speaking.</p>

Comments from Users, Survey 1

add using users' eadd only for important issues, eg: items overdue.
All of our librarians do an outstanding job -- I only wish we had the taxes to increase their salaries
As a resident of [blank]. I truly appreciate the Bookmobile. Thank you to all of the staff of the Bookmobile and the [blank]
As a [blank] I AM OFFENDED BY THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THIS QUESTIONNAIRE IS MOST UNSCIENTIFIC. You people have designed the questions in such ways as to MANIPULATE the answers by the respondent. What is going on here?Why have you done this?Who designed this questionnaire?Why should anyone respond to questions for which YOU PEOPLE HAVE ALREADY DECIDED THE ANSWERS?!--The quietions are NOT numbered, yet your error msgs. refer to them BY NUMBER!This is poor design. --How can one answer "None of these is the most important concern for my library" in Question9, whne one is REQUIRED TO GIVE 5 AND ONLY 5 ANSWERS!Whoever designed this questionnaire must have an IQ of around 65. This is a specific example of PREDETERMINED OUTCOME. This entire study should be scrapped and the perpetrators FIRED!
Automated security systems and checkout is not a priority - how ridiculous!
Being a former library employee in another state, I feel that it is extremely important to a community to have a well rounded library system. I also think it is important to have branch or satellite libraries to serve the people who live outside the immediate area of the main library. It is understood that this takes money but reading is the key to the future. I am approximately 15 miles (probably more) from my closest library and miss using it more often. In my opinion, libraries are not used to their fullest potential by its resident. They are a wonderful and important asset to any community and my husband and I appreciate them very much.
Big fan of the new audio book program [blank] Also, keep up the blog! If it weren't for that we'd miss a lot of the programs and new services. In fact, since you asked, even more energy should be poured into the blog.
Couldn't live without talking books. Best program around.
[blank] County Public Library needs a new, larger facility.
Dear Library Board:For years when I visited [blank] Branch or Main library I made mental note of all the books I would like to read someday when time allowed. After retiring a few years ago I am finding all those volumes that once attracted me are now gone. Far too many have disappeared for it to be due to theft or physical wear and tear. I rather suspect that an over-vigorous discarding policy is responsible for the loss of classic and important works in many fields. Having once worked in the [blank] Public Library many years ago I know there is a pressure to free-up shelf space for new works and those books with low circulation get targeted to be discarded. In this process hopefully there is also consideration for quality, significance and availability of more recent editions. I see no evidence that this restraint has occurred in [blank]. While [blank] Library has kept modern in media technology and new buildings and community support, its core function of maintaining a collection of books has suffered. My own interest is history and biography. In the early 1980's one could still find the works of those involved in World War II: Eisenhower's Crusade in Europe, Omar Bradley's Soldiers Story, Churchill's five volume history of the war, Charles De Gaulle's memoirs and many others. Although the library has new works of history, one can not replace the first-hand accounts of those who lived it. Public libraries, in my opinion, have an archival responsibility which has been totally ignored in the last decade or so in [blank]. The same thing is happening in significant fiction. In a recent visit to the [Blank] Branch I could find no Hemingway, Dickens, or Tolstoy works. All gone. I wish I were writing to you to appeal from a policy that is just beginning but I am afraid that the scouring of the library's collection is nearly complete. There is little left that has not been published in the last ten years or so. To one who has an appreciation of the past and important writings, the Mobile Library shelves have become a void. Against all hope I am appealing the to the Board to begin a program to identify books that need to be retained and a program to re-acquire from used book stores, estate sales, appeals for donations or other means those works which would re-establish a quality collection for the Library.
Great Library, keep up the good work. Please clean up and make the entrance to our downtown library more attractive. The sidewalk needs to be pressure washed.
Have different sections clearly identified for people who are not used to the library. Have a computer intro class in the evenings after work. Have more video selections.
[Blank] needs a branch library on the western side of town and one on the Hwy [blank] side of town. The main library is extremely busy but even more people in our city need access to library pograms closer to their homes.



I appreciate very much the services available at [blank] Public Library and the courteous, competent staff providing them. My favorite service is checking out audio-books to play while driving. I "read" so many excellent books that provide good company and entertainment when I am so frequently on the road. A library is crucial to the community's advancement in so many ways. Thank you!
I believe that adequate funding would allow libraries to better serve their clientele at every level. However, securing that funding will be challenging. Since everyone knows that the squeaky wheel gets the grease a concerted advertising plan would help achieve that goal. It will raise awareness, and drive traffic.
I DO ENJOY HAVING THE ONLINE CATALOG TO FIND BOOKS AT [BLANK] PUBLIC LIBRARY PLUS THE RENOVATED SPRINGVILLE ROAD LIBRARY LOOKS PRETTY GOOD. ALSO THE SOUTHERN HISTORY DEPARTMENT AT MAIN LIBRARY HAS GOOD RESOURCES ON FAMILY HISTORY. THANK YOU.
I do not believe automation should be introduced. It is not inconvenient - and rarely to I have to wait long - for library personnel to check me out. I feel the introduction of this technology will simply cause people to lose their jobs. The web site needs a lot of work and streamlining. Most important: THE USER SHOULD ONLY HAVE TO LOG ON WITH THEIR NAME AND LIBRARY NUMBER ONE TIME - NOT EACH AND EVERY TIME A BOOK IS REQUESTED!
I feel the employees at [blank] library need to take their jobs a little more serious. I say this because I have had them not check in material for me until weeks later, making it lost for some time. This has happened to me on more than one time. Due to this I no longer use [blank] library.
I find the biggest flaw in the system is the lack of research materials and people who know the basics about research. Mainly, I was appalled to discover that not one branch owned the Oxford English Dictionary nor did any of the reference librarians even know what it was. Knowing I had used the OED at the main branch, I was at a loss to understand what happened until I met someone who purchased the entire set for \$25. Also, there were questions I did not have an opinion/knowledge about but had to answer to proceed.
I had some trouble determining if I should answer the priority questions based on what is most important for my family, or based on my opinion of what is most important for my entire city. For example, my family consists of my wife and me, and we are both senior citizens. English is our native language. So, my family has no need for non-English materials. Our city has a growing Hispanic population and thus does need non- English materials. Maybe you should divide the survey between a section on personal needs and another section on city needs.
I have lived here for 16 years and seen the library facility in [blank] continually expand. However, I believe that [blank] could use more library space and possibly include a small auditorium for local plays, music events,lectures, and be available to the public for a variety of fees. The auditorium's foyer could act as a gallery that could house works by AL. artists and craftsmen. In order to keep the space very professional looking, the library should look to employ a person that has experience in gallery and public events. It could even include a large area that could be divided into various rooms by using space dividers. This community could easily support such an endeavour without question. [Blank]
I have two major complaints with the [blank] public library-A used book store staffed by the friends of the library, located at the west regional and filled with donations would bring in a lot of money. I wishthe libraries would open when they are suppose to. I cant tell you how many times I have had to wait 5-10 minutes for the staff to unlock the doors at opening.
I hope that I have not contradicted myself in answering the questions. To me, my library has been a most important gift of taxpayers to the public. We should continue to support these services by all means and try to keep up with the latest developments in serving the reading public. Persons in library services should be acknowledged for their important contributions to the education of the public.
I originally did not answer 9. because I have no knowledge about the question.
I personally belive that the libraries need more funding through state level and that people need to remember that reading is fundamental and starting and keeping the youth of america interested in reading will help everyone have a better future.
I recently went to the library located at [blank] make a copy; I was horrified at the parking lot. The library should either add a parking deck or find another way to add extra parking for their patrons. Because I do not enjoy parking on the street, I will not be in a hurry to come back.
I reside in [blank] county and use Alabama library services there, but I also work in [Blank]county and use those library services often. I greatly appreciate the resources and wonderful staff at the [blank] library and can't emphasize enough how valuable the library has been for me and my family.
I think adult literacy is an important issue. It would be nice to have a separate adult learner section that has books for adults who are either basic learners or ESL and up along the way.

I would like a bigger selection of fiction books. The library phases these out too soon. They need to keep them in their libraries longer. I love the internet renewal and how we can keep up with our library materials.
I would like to say that I have had excellent service with the staff of the [blank] Public Library and [they] have been very helpful in every way and I know that you will keep up the good work
I would like to see more funds available for materials. Very often new works are for sale on-line or at the book store long before the library orders it. I would also like to see our librarians have access to finding new publications before patrons request them.
I would like to see the library serve home educators and other interested parents with more books and information on education in the home and more educational and reading programs for older children in the library.
I would love to be able to check some thing out from one library and return it to another
I would LOVE to see a branch in [blank].
If certain individuals abuse library privileges, punish those individuals. DO NOT punish all library patrons by removing the library services associated with the abuse of privileges.
Increase budget for books on tape
It is difficult to make specific choices as indicated in this questionnaire because all of the options have some merit. That being said, the most important function for a public library is to provide access to information and to promote literacy among the citizens of its area. To that end, I encourage children's reading programs and access to materials in many various ways, from bookmobiles to books by mail to computer access, but some of the bells and whistles, like wireless access, are not necessary given limited budget concerns. Automated checkout is not a bell or whistle, I don't think, because it frees up library staff to do other things. I love the [blank]Public Library system and the other municipal libraries in the [blank] County area and use most of them regularly.
It is imperative that local and state officials recognize the need for good libraries in the community. This is a hallmark of how much emphasis the community places on caring and serving the whole community. While some are aged, handicapped, disadvantaged, they should all have access to reading materials. Also, it lets newcomers have a way of getting acquainted with what the community values.
It would be nice if the library had a more lean policy about fees. The library is FREE serve, right? The library in Indiana was an honor policy. If you were late returning books in a few days after the due date they honor you by not fining you since you did return them.
It would be nice if the Library would consider having a child's reading hour or other programs for children on Saturdays or after 5 p. m. on week days. Parents who work would still like to encourage their children to participate in such programs, but are often unable to attend at the times these programs are held. Also, please have someone at the library review the children's DVDs often. Most of the children's DVDs that I have checked out for my child are scratched or damaged so badly that we were unable to watch them. My child is so disappointed when this happens. I always tell the clerk when I return them, or attach a note to the DVD case if I return them in the after-hours drop box. I've noticed that sometimes when I tell the clerk, she doesn't seem to care. There are a few clerks who have issued me a credit for the DVD because I was unable to watch the ones I paid for when they're damaged or scratched. This was very courteous of them and much appreciated. We love your new library on [blank] Road!!!!Very convenient.
[blank] is blessed to have a wonderful library staff who work very hard to make our library the best it can be. We're outgrowing our space quickly. Funding for new books and programs is always a need.
Keep up the good work
Libraries in Alabama need more funding.
Libraries should be open 7 days a week. Need more evening hours, less early morning hours.
Libraries will need to adapt to the changing times with overlapping information available on the internet. In my opinion they need to become more program oriented. That will challenge the leadership abilities of the librarian in new ways.
Library books should be filed by topic rather than by author. Mistery - western - History etc. Very few (if any) readers are familiar with which authors write a particular kind of book. It would simplify the search for your favorite topic, rather than browse the entire library.
Library needs to be open on Saturday for access.
Library use habits are established in one's early years of age by parents and re-inforced by schools. . .

<p>emphasis should be with our young, not senior citizens (who probably already take advantage of their public library and its resources, etc. )Internet opportunities should be made available for those who do not have access to computers at home or school, etc. Ala Virtual Library should be highly promoted both locally and statewide.</p>
<p>Make computers available to all libraries, with better virus and firewall protection than the system now has, more time on the computers available to each patron, and library staff who know how to use computers. I personally think that the library is NO PLACE TO PLAY COMPUTER GAMES! And they should NOT BE AVAILABLE for kids to play on library computers! The kids get into playing the games, get rowdy, and won't get off the computers and make them available for other patrons. The librarians end up having to play babysitter. I'm sure that the librarians have more to do than that,right?Kids have that kind of thing available to them at arcades or at home. The libraries are no place for it. The only other thing I might add is that all libraries should have facilities available. That means a restroom and waterfountain for patrons to use.</p>
<p>more computers and to stay open longer</p>
<p>More computers in the branch libiries.</p>
<p>More funding from tax revenues. It's one of the very best ways to INVEST taxpayer's money.</p>
<p>More hours of operation</p>
<p>More internet computer access available to community. Library program is good, but needs more activities for ages 10-12yrs.</p>
<p>Most of the personal are very pleasent to work with as a patron, but some need to work very hard at being a little nicer. The attitude of some not all make it very unpleasent when you are trying to be polite and patient, and they have a nasty attitude with you for no reason. My son comes to the library after school and when I get off from work I pick him up and while I am here it is nice to be able to get on the computer and wind down for a few minutes before heading home.</p>
<p>My husband and I read many books -- we visit the library regularly. Many of the programs do not apply to us, but we'd be lost without our library.</p>
<p>My wife and I are firm believers that the most important public institution in a city or town is the library. One of the reasons that we decided to move here was the availability of decent (although not great) libraries and plenty of supermarkets. Oddly enough the two are very important to a good family life. I was appalled to read about the controversy in the city council or county officials recently regarding library funding being cut. NEVER should funding be reduced for a library or education but should continually be increased in response to both inflation and growing populations. [blank] county libraries are decent, but nowhere near good enough for a county that is not only growing, but hoping to attract more and more tech jobs and families to the area. If you count that the internet usually requires money to get online, the library through books and internet access facilities is the single most important educational source for our citizens. We have news media as such, but only way to konw that they are right in what they tell you is to "look it up" for yourself. I have educated myself to a good extent on everything from ancient history and literature to physics and astrophysics principles and done it all through libraries and internet usage. If most folks had to buy or borrow every book they wanted to read from somebody we would have a huge education problem. Schooling doesn't end after high school or college and isn't all in elementary school either. In short the more educated we all here in Alabama are, the more we will attract other like minded folk to work and invest their time and money with us to make this place a great place to live. The rest of our govt. buildings are to maintain the functions of our society. The Library is where we actually "create" that society. Thanks for providing an opportunity to voice an opinion. (signed)</p>
<p>Need more computers so there is never a waiting line to use. Suggest at least double what is now available. Also have a system where folks could come in with their own computers and use the internet. Also need longer open hours on Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Closing at 5 or 6 is just too early. For schhol kids and us old folks too (age 69). Need better xerox machines and internet or network printers with no charge for bad copies. I really don't like to pay 10 per page when the copy is not useful at all to me or anybody else. As a result I no longer make copies. If I could gety good copies I would print out about 500 pages per month. Thanks for the survey. I am not against anybody use of the library. I ma expressing only my own use. I have been using the library since 1964. I am now here almost everyday. I undrestand that Bill Gates is going to donate more computers. 50% more may not be enough. Waiting to log on should never occur!!I have used extensively the foloowing libraries over the years Perhaps [blank] library personnel should visit some of these other places and observe what is best at each of them. Microfilm of financail newspapers going back to 1920's is super at West Florida. Naturally [blank] has the best technical library around. Find out the best features then</p>

incorporate the best of each. then you will be the BEST of all. For instance, your AM Best Insurance reference are dated000. Not much value in006!Have a good day. "It would be better to build bigger libraries with more books than larger City Halls, Court Houses, Jails, ad Dog Pounds. We have it completely backwards.
no suggestions – the [blank] Library is practically perfect in every way!
Not everyone has a computer, therefore books need to be a priority, such as reference. The reference areas need to be updated. Computers do not provide all information. Libraries are not about being a 'media center. ' Libraries should be about education, reading for pleasure. The money spent on feature films and CD's is appalling. It should be spent on reference materials. You have a diverse population, consider those who prefer to hold a book in their hand. There's nothing like it. Libraries should be about literacy and education, not entertainment. There are plenty of video/DVD stores. Get back to the basics. If we do not encourage reading, people can't fill out applicatons forms, learn to think for themselves. That's what reading and education do. Please stop catering to people who want to be entertained. Libraries have 'dumbed down. 'As a former paraprofessional in a county library, I find the focus of libraries, entertainemnt, sad, very sad, indeed. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to express myself. My thoughts have been mocked at my local library.
[blank] LIBRARY RULES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
Our main library has only enough funding to stay open 3 days a week. This is VERY inconvient.
Please change the way you check out the books. It is destructive to put all of those little stickers on the back of the books. In most major cities, you can scan the ISBN # to check out books or utilize a catalogue code with only ONE sticker on the back of the book. It is confusing to children to see the librarian ruining a book cover and then be told to treat the book with respect.
Please expand framed art collection.
Please keep our libraries funded and open. They are the greatest resource to people of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds.
Public Libraries are the one thing that comes to my mind that provides benefits to all citizens regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Any institution that can do all of that deserves much more in the way of funding than they apparently get!
Slow service. But when I get it it is great.
So far, I have been very pleased with the [blank] library. The children's play/book area is always well kept and interesting, the staff are knowledgeable and always ready to help, and I really like the "courtesy" emails sent to remind me of an upcoming due date. :)
So many elementary-age children are not on grade level in reading and comprehension. I think it would be wonderful if the library could serve this group.
Staff at [blank] library are very knowledgeable and friendly. Please hurry up and get the library rebuilt.
strange questionnaire -- what kind of results are you trying to force, anyway?
thanks
Thanks for the great work you do with too limited resources. State and local governments need to provide more financial support for your vital programs.
The [blank]Road Branch could be expanded. When I have been in there the employees have been very helpful and knowledgeable about the computer systems and looking up information. My son has gone through the summer reading program and was excited about it.
The [blank] library needs to go forward with renovation so they have room for more computers and more room for children's services.
The [blank] library has made such vast improvements in the last 5 years that it is remarkable.
The [blank] Public Library needs more material for children, especially toddlers. It would also be helpful to be able to treat AV material with the same flexibility as books. . . i. e. reserving online for pickup at any library, and being able to return items to any location.
The [blank] Public Library has outgrown its current building. I believe, in order to serve the community better, the library needs a new facility.
The [blank] County Libraries are excellent. I love the system that they have.
The Library should not try to be all things to all people. It should remain focused on its core business. It's not a computer lab nor is it a Blockbuster. And please ask people to turn off their cellphones when in the Library.
The public library is such a great asset to me. I have had a hard time on this survey to think "outside the box", and answer for the whole community instead of what services I use. I use the library every week. I still have a

hard time understanding people that do not use it. Thank you for being there for me!
The staff at [blank] Public Library children's department has always been very helpful, but this library should offer more children's programs, particularly afternoons and evenings. Look to – and [blank] library children's programs as models. -- is lacking here.
The [blank]Library does not order enough new books on a yearly basis, especially with the best sellers. Like most other state agencies the libraries are grossly lacking in adequate funding.
There is very poor management the [blank] Public Library. Not only has the manager been given time off for physically abusing staff, but she went around the town bragging about it to patrons. She throws hissy fits in front of the patrons and she is rude to people often. Why do you people tolerate this behavior?
This questionnaire was too long and repeated different forms of the same questions several times(why?).
[blank] thinks MySpace rocks & so do librarians!
We have a great library. The Southern History department is my favorite. My friends from all over the south come here for genealogy research. The staff is wonderful! Don't let any of them get away.
We must get additional funding, without more funding we cannot continue to get new materials for the library and extend more help to the community with public service programs for the young and underprivileged. A larger supply of new books and materials would help to encourage more citizens to use our library.
We need more libraries within safe walking distance of children and adults. New libraries should also incorporate other, compatible uses like playgrounds and cafes so they can become the heart of a neighborhood, especially in older areas that are quite dense, and in public housing.
We need to remember that all the technology, and all the new libraries and bookmobiles and resources in the world will not be one bit useful if the libraries cannot keep their doors open late enough in the evenings and on weekends for those who need access to be able to use them. Our key problem is lack of money to pay the appropriate number of staff to provide access. Because of lack of staff, kids and rural people-- a huge percentage of our population-- do without crucial library services.
When building new libraries, it seems that we in county are forgotten. If it is a [blank] County library why are they mostly located in the city?
While it will be VERY helpful to have at least one person in each library who can speak Spanish, I do not think materials should be provided in anything but English. A few books in dual languages would likely be of use in learning English, but governments should not subsidize the avoidance of learning English. I do not like the automated check-out of materials such as is used in the [blank] library; but prefer the method of putting the expected date on each item as is still done in the [blank] Library. Programs for children and youth are very important to Alabama's future. Serving the elderly via extension programs in nursing homes and bookmobile are also important, but not as important as getting young folks interested in reading. I use the [blank] and [blank] libraries weekly and sometimes use the libraries In – or [blank]. I am an active user and support both libraries via donations. My favorite library use is books on CD and I like the Recorded Books unabridged versions. Recorded Books has better readers than Brilliance or Random House. The reader makes or breaks the enjoyment of audio books. A great story read by a lower quality reader can make the book not worth listening to. And a so-so story can come alive with a good reader. The staff at the Sheffield Library are wonderful!! much prefer to get my books and CDs from them than from the other libraries in this area.
who the heck are the "underserved"?
Wireless access would be a bonus to library users. It would assist those needing the service, yet they still remain in a library setting for research and printing.
I guess it was planned to ask the same questions over and over to get accurate opinions.

**Alabama Public Library Service  
User Survey 2**

**Please mark the best answer or answers to the following questions.  
The information will be used to inform the Alabama Public Library  
Service on the use of public library services in Alabama.**

1. Are you a public library user?  
 YES  
 1.a. Do you have a library card?  
 YES  
 NO  
 NO
  
2. Are you an Alabama resident?  
 YES  
 2.a. In which county do you live? \_\_\_\_\_  
 NO
  
3. How long have you been an Alabama resident?  
 Less than one year  
 One to five years  
 Six to ten years  
 More than 10 years
  
4. To which age group do you belong?  
 Over 60  
 46-60  
 31-45  
 21-30  
 Under 21

5. Please check one:  
 I am a male.  
 I am a female.
6. Are there children between the ages of 4 years and 18 years in your household?  
 YES  
6. a. Please list the ages of the children. \_\_\_\_\_  
 NO
7. Are you aware of the state's Summer Reading Program?  
 YES (Go to question #8 below.)  
 NO (Go to question #10 below.)
8. Has anyone in your household participated in a Summer Reading Program?  
 YES (Go to question #9 below.)  
 NO (Go to question # 10 below.)
9. Do you believe that your children's reading skills improved as a result of participation in a library reading program?  
 YES  
 NO
10. Have you ever heard of the Alabama Virtual Library or the "AVL?"  
 YES  
10.a. Have you or a family member used the AVL?  
 YES  
 NO  
 NO

11. Have you or has anyone in your household participated in a reading or literacy skill program at a library in Alabama?  
 YES  
 NO
12. Have you or has anyone in your household learned life-coping skills through association with the library?  
 YES  
 NO
13. Have you or has anyone in your household taken a computer-related course at an Alabama public library?  
 YES  
 NO
14. In which of the following areas has your life, or have the lives of your household members, improved through use of the library? (Check all that apply.)
- Reading skills
  - Skills for the workplace
  - Personal enrichment
  - Community awareness
  - Computer literacy
  - Cultural awareness
  - Foreign language skills
  - Parenting skills
  - Other \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for completing our user survey!



## INDEX

The following table provides a simple index to locations of mentions (in text and tabular forms) of the six overarching goals outlined in the 2003-2007 State Plan.

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