

**An Independent Evaluation of the
Maine State Library's Implementation of the
Library Services & Technology Act
Five-Year State Plan
2003-2007**

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I. Introductory Statement and Summary of Impact of IMLS Funds to Support State Library Services

The Library Services and Technology Act ((LSTA) (20 U.S.C. 9141) specifies that a State Library Administrative Agency shall expend funds for one or more of the following:

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

The six goals in the Maine State Library's (MSL) Five-Year Plan 2003-2007 support the LSTA priorities as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: LSTA Priorities supported by Maine State Library Five-Year Plan 2003-2007	
LSTA Purpose	Maine State Library Goal
3, 6	GOAL 1: Improve services, increase access, and improve efficiency for Outreach Services users (Talking Book, Large Print, and Books-by-Mail.)
6	GOAL 2: Encourage all Maine children to read and provide equal support to blind, visually or physically impaired, and rural youth.
5	GOAL 3: Launch and sustain a comprehensive public information campaign and develop resources that will spread awareness and increase use of Outreach Services and assistive technologies in libraries throughout the state.

Table 1: (Continued)	
LSTA Priorities supported by Maine State Library Five-Year Plan 2003-2007	
LSTA Purpose	Maine State Library Goal
1, 2, 3	GOAL 4: Ensure that all Maine residents have convenient and timely access to all Maine libraries and information services through “live” integrated library software, interlibrary cooperation, and resource sharing arrangements.
3	GOAL 5: Improve efficiency and cost effectiveness of resource sharing among Maine libraries.
1, 2	GOAL 6: Expand easily accessible electronic information sources to all Maine residents.

Maine is a largely rural state with a population density of approximately 43 residents per square mile¹; less than any other eastern state and approximately one-half of the national average. Many of Maine’s 1.3 million residents are distributed among small communities that are served by 273 autonomous public libraries, many of which have very limited resources. Almost two-thirds of the public libraries in the State are association libraries. The remaining libraries are municipal libraries. A substantial percentage of the population (approximately 15%) remains unserved by a local library. Because of these realities, the Maine State Library has continued to provide a variety of library services on a statewide basis from a central location. The State Plan reflects this centralized approach.

The Maine State Library is committed to achieving an unparalleled quality of information service and access to resources for all citizens of Maine by building strong, cooperative partnerships among all types of libraries in the State. The State Library endeavors to meet the administrative, developmental, and technical assistance needs of Maine libraries, in addition to providing direct service to the approximately 200,000 residents who live in towns without local libraries.

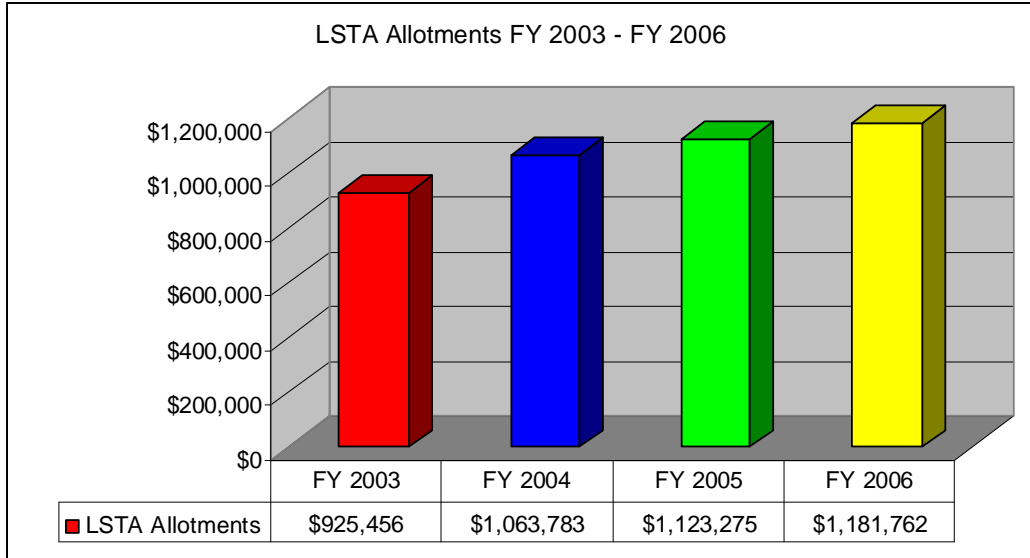
The first three goals in Maine’s Five-Year LSTA Plan for 2003 – 2007 are focused on improving awareness of and access to library services for the Maine citizens without local public libraries and for individuals with disabilities regardless of where they live in the State. The three remaining goals speak to the expansion of resource sharing among libraries in the State through the improvement of the information technology infrastructure, the initiation of van delivery service, and the provision of planning, coordination, technical assistance, and training. Table 2 summarizes progress toward the six goals set by the Maine State Library for 2003 - 2007.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau. 2005 Estimate

Table 2: Summary of Progress toward Goals and Objectives, 2002-03 to 2004-05				
	No Progress	Progressing	Met Goal	Surpassed Goal
GOAL 1: <i>Improve services, increase access, and improve efficiency for Outreach Service users (Books By Mail, Talking Books, and Large Print Books).</i>				
Activity 1.1. Mount or link OPACS and automate all cataloging, circulation, interlibrary loan, and reporting functions to improve access and efficiency/timeliness of operations.			X	
Activity 1.2. Develop the Outreach Services web site into one that is universally designed, with parallel pages for graphics-oriented and visually-impaired patrons who are differently-abled, including helpful links and resources.			X	
Activity 1.3. Develop online request features, either through existing features of integrated library software or through interactive forms.			X	
Activity 1.4. Create virtual book and other interactive online group discussions and programs with chat, bulletin board, or similar software.		X		
Activity 1.5. Provide e-mail links for users to contact appropriate staff for information, routing, reference referral, and readers' advisory.			X	
Activity 1.6. Mount or link online public access catalogs for all programs.			X	
GOAL 2: <i>Encourage all Maine children to read and provide equal support to blind, visually or physically impaired, and rural youth.</i>				
Activity 2.1. Participate in the Cooperative Summer Library Program (12-state consortium) by purchasing a manual and core sets of materials for all Maine public libraries.			X	
Activity 2.2. Network with library associations, educators, and children's librarians throughout the state to develop shared incentives, kickoff events, and ideas for local initiatives.			X	
GOAL 3: <i>Launch and sustain a comprehensive public information campaign and develop resources that will spread awareness and increase use of Outreach Services and assistive technologies in libraries throughout the state.</i>				
Activity 3.1. Identify and implement relevant training opportunities in assistive technology and library services for diverse populations for Outreach Services staff and librarians throughout the state.		X		
Activity 3.2. Develop a clearinghouse of resources, provide site licenses for screen reading software, and create a lending library of assistive devices in Outreach Services.		X		
Activity 3.3. Develop and promote a pilot program prototype to organize volunteer efforts to bring large print books to assisted living centers throughout the state.		X		
Activity 3.4. Form relationships with local service clubs and create a Friends of Outreach Services to provide supplemental support for the programs (e.g., fund raisers for the purchase of descriptive videos) and to improve public relations.		X		

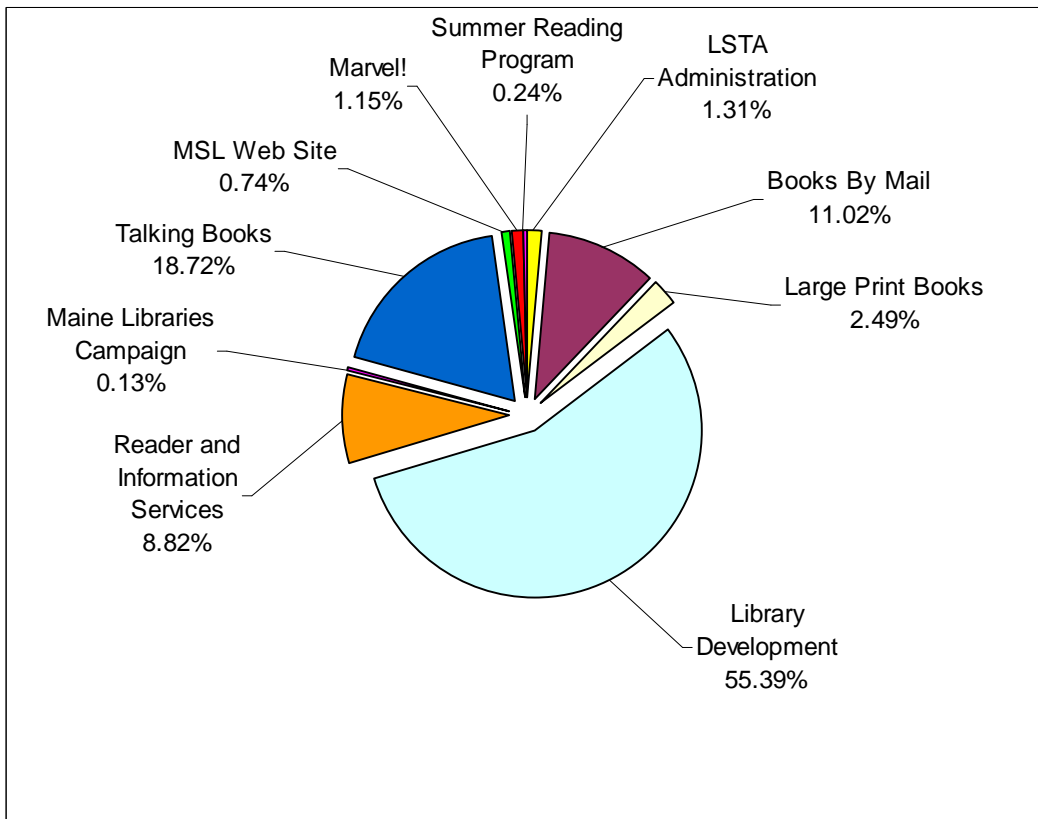
	No Progress	Progressing	Met Goal	Surpassed Goal
GOAL 4: Ensure that all Maine residents have convenient and timely access to all Maine libraries and information services through Maine Info Net, which provides live integrated library software, interlibrary cooperation, and resource sharing arrangements.				
Activity 4.1. Provide support for an increased number of Maine libraries to participate in MINERVA, providing patrons with up-to-date Internet access to holdings and patron information and ensuring efficient interlibrary loan transactions.		X		
GOAL 5: Improve efficiency and cost-effectiveness of resource sharing among Maine libraries.				
Activity 5.1. Identify the most cost-effective, efficient statewide delivery system.			X	
Activity 5.2. Implement a statewide delivery system based on the report of the delivery system committee, monitoring and adjusting as needed.			X	
Activity 5.3. Collect and disseminate data to the legislature and other interested parties about efficiency, improvements, and cost savings for local libraries.		X		
GOAL 6: Expand easily accessible electronic information sources to all Maine residents.				
Activity 6.1. Expand and deliver access to electronic resources.			X	
Activity 6.2. Pay costs for libraries to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies, encouraging libraries in different areas to establish consortia and share resources.		X		
Activity 6.3. Generate statewide publicity to educate the literacy community and citizens and enable them to utilize these [electronic information] resources.			X	

Because LSTA funds are distributed largely on the basis of population, the amount of LSTA funding allotted to the State of Maine is relatively small in comparison to other states. Maine's fiscal year (FY) 2006 allotment of \$1,181,762 places it 40th among the states. Graph 1 on the next page shows the history of LSTA allotments to Maine since FY 2003. Amounts of LSTA funding available have been \$925,456, \$1,063,783, \$1,123,275, and \$1,181,762 for FY 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 respectively.



Graph 1 – LSTA Allotments FY 2003 – FY 2006

Graph 2 shows LSTA funds were distributed among various programs for fiscal years 2003, 2004 and 2005.



Graph 2 – LSTA Expenditures by Program – FY 2003 – FY 2005

As was noted earlier, demographic and library governance realities in Maine demand a centralized approach to service delivery. This naturally leads to a situation in which LSTA dollars are used to support centralized services flowing from the Maine State Library. In fact, almost all LSTA funds are allocated “internally,” that is, within the state library administrative agency. However, the thrust of nearly all of the programs supported with LSTA is outward. Furthermore, MSL does a marvelous job of using a mixture of funding sources for almost everything it does. The cash match for virtually every program undertaken in the three year period documented in this evaluation exceeds the LSTA funding allocated to it. In other words, while LSTA is a significant component in many things that MSL does, state library agency programs are not solely dependent on LSTA funding.

Funding through the Library Services and Technology Act enables the Maine State Library to extend the reach of its services to thousands of Maine residents who would otherwise lack basic public library services. At the same time, LSTA funds are used in concert with State revenues and funds from a variety of other sources ranging from individuals to municipal governments to greatly enhance the quality of library and information services that are available to residents of communities that are directly served by local public libraries. Finally, LSTA funding provides the glue that fosters multitype library cooperation in the State.

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

GOAL 1: Improve services, increase access, and improve efficiency for Outreach Services users (Talking Book, Large Print, and Books By Mail.)

Activity 1.1: Develop comprehensive web access.

Strategy 1.1.1: Mount or link Online Public Access Catalogs (OPACs) and automate all cataloging, circulation, interlibrary loan, and reporting functions.

Activities

In 2004-05, the State Library developed an OPAC for talking books, large print books, and descriptive videos.

The Books By Mail collection was added to MINERVA, Maine's online catalog and interlibrary loan system. See also Goal 4 below.

Desired Outcome

Users will be better consumers of Outreach services; healthier, more active in their communities; be able to read, and develop rich cultural lives.

Indicators of Success

In the 2005 Books By Mail survey, 99.6% of respondents agreed with the statement "Using Books By Mail improves the quality of my life." Over ninety percent (90.4%) agreed with the statement "With Books By Mail, I feel that I am part of a statewide community."

Strategy 1.1.2: Develop the Outreach Services web site into one that is universally designed, with parallel pages for graphics-oriented and visually-impaired patrons, including helpful links to information on services to disabled populations.

Activities

The Maine State Library website was completely redesigned during FY 2003.

In 2004-05, the State Library reported that the web site was “one of the most important means by which the Maine State Library communicates with the public and libraries statewide.”

During this year, the State Library established a web team that met regularly to review site architecture, set policy, improve usability and accessibility, and plan for future projects. The team customized Maine State Government templates and developed a new logo in order to improve recognition and branding of the Library. More than 900 web pages were moved to the common web page template. Online surveys, forms, and resources in multiple formats (RTF, PDF, HTML) offered improved usability. Dynamic accessible content included press releases, an online calendar of events, a reference resource of the month, and a statewide list of performers. Adoption of mini-content management software allowed content managers to add their own content; tighter code structure helped maintain accessibility across the site.

Desired Outcome

Collections and services will be accessible to individuals, institutions and libraries via the Internet by 2005.

Indicators of Success

The State Library’s website is 100% compliant with Maine government standards for accessibility for persons with disabilities as measured with AccMonitor, the software used by the State to measure compliance. The MSL webmaster was recognized by the State with a Maine Excellence Recognition in Information technology (MERIT) award for “her work in improving accessibility for disabled citizens and employees.”

Strategy 1.1.3: Develop online request features, either through existing features of integrated library software or through interactive forms.

Activities

After registering, users may place online requests for Books By Mail through MINERVA. The online catalog also lists recorded cassettes, large print books, and descriptive videos available from the Maine Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Braille will be added in the future. Registered users may search the catalog by author, title, word in title, subject, or even the “narrator.”

Desired Outcome

Users will be better able to use the resources available to them.

Indicators of Success

A message to MSL from a staff member at another New England state's LBPH program asked whether it was "OK to borrow some ideas from the MSL Outreach website" because some of their talking book patrons were using Maine's website because it was so easy to use. The librarian from the other state indicated that they planned to implement an online order form such as the one that is included on Maine's site.

Strategy 1.1.4: Create virtual book and other interactive online group discussions and programs with chat, bulletin board, or similar software.

Activities

Maine State Library Outreach Services is a member of Online Programming for All Libraries (OPAL). This is an accessible online room providing virtual library programming such as book discussions and other informational sessions.

Several state-sponsored bulletin boards were set up with links to them on the MSL web site for several years. These never caught on. Maine State Library staff agree that the software was "clunky" and not especially user-friendly. MSL is now exploring the use of blogs as a communication mechanism.

Desired Outcome

Otherwise isolated individuals will feel part of a virtual online community that will enrich lives and provide intellectual stimulation.

Indicators of Success

There has been progress and efforts are ongoing. As was noted above, several state-supported bulletin boards were established on various topics and links were provided from the web site; however, despite MSL attempts to encourage people to participate and to stimulate discussion, these never "caught on" or became active.

In order to accomplish what they originally set out to do, MSLO joined OPAL, Online Programming for All Libraries, which is an accessible online room providing virtual library programming such as book discussions and other informational sessions. The MSLO web site provides patrons with links to this service and the Coordinator has presented programs to encourage use. Efforts are also underway to establish blogs that may be used for these purposes.

In a 2006 survey of Books By Mail users, 90.4% of respondents reported: “With Books By Mail, I feel that I am part of a statewide community.”

Strategy 1.1.5: Provide e-mail links for users to contact appropriate staff for information, routing, reference, referral, and readers advisory.

Activities

The MSL Outreach website includes many hotlinks that allow users to ask questions and to interact with a variety of staff members who provide program information as well as readers’ advisory services. The Books By Mail program’s web presence includes a specific link just for readers’ advisory service.

Desired Outcome

Outreach services users will feel that there are people at MSL who care about their needs.

Indicators of Success

One Books By Mail user forward a note that read “I would like to thank you for the wonderful service you offer... it’s nice to know that when we want a book it is as close as the nearest computer!”

The evaluators were very impressed by the amount of correspondence (both e-mail and “snail-mail”) and other direct communication that MSL staff members have with its user. The comments reveal that there are many residents of the State who have never been to the MSL building in Augusta who nevertheless know that they “have a friend” at the Maine State Library!

Strategy 1.1.6: Mount or link OPACs for all programs.

Activities

The State Library participates in URSUS, an online catalog linking their collection with those of the University of Maine System, Bangor Public Library, Maine State Archives, Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library, and providing automated circulation and interlibrary loan capabilities. Patrons received bar-coded library cards, which allowed them to reserve, renew, and review items checked out from their home computers.

See also 1.1.1. above.

Desired Outcome

Catalog large print, descriptive video and Books By Mail into integrated library software available via the web.

Indicators of Success

Survey responses and anecdotal information shows that users have found access to materials has been enhanced both through the inclusion of resources in the catalog and the easy interface to resources that is provided through the Outreach Services web pages.

GOAL 2: Encourage all Maine children to read and provide equal support to blind, visually or physically impaired, and rural youth.

Activity 2.1: Establish a statewide summer reading program which will integrate blind, visually and physically impaired, geographically isolated, rural, and all other Maine children into one summer reading community.

Strategy 2.1.1: Coordinator of Outreach Services will assume responsibility for this program, in collaboration with participating libraries, organizations, agencies, and families.

Strategy 2.1.2: Participate in the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) by purchasing a manual and core sets of materials for all Maine public libraries.

Strategy 2.1.3: Network with library associations, educators, and children's librarians throughout Maine to develop shared incentives, kickoff events, and ideas for local initiatives.

Desired Outcomes and Indicators of Success The Outreach Services area was selected by the Maine State Library as the focus for the evaluation of the application of outcome-based evaluation methods. See details about the Summer Reading Program and other outreach services in section IV: Progress in Showing Results of Library Initiatives or Services – Outcome-Based Evaluation.

GOAL 3: *Launch and sustain a comprehensive public information campaign and develop resources that will spread awareness and increase use of Outreach Services and assistive technologies in libraries throughout the state.*

Activity 3.1: Identify and implement relevant training opportunities for Outreach Services staff in assistive technology and library services for diverse populations; develop and extend the opportunities to librarians throughout the state.

Strategy 3.1.1. Do presentations in various parts of the state on Talking Books, Large Print, and Books-by-Mail programs, seeking partnerships, and the development of innovative programming partnerships in order to improve knowledge of the services available to blind, via assistive technology.

Desired Outcome

More eligible persons will be well informed and served by the available programs.

Indicators of Success

There has been some progress in efforts to train Outreach staff and librarians throughout the state. The Coordinator and librarians network with colleagues online via various listservs. The Coordinator also attends relevant sessions and meetings at the annual American Library Association conferences. The majority of Outreach staff attended programs at the May 2006 National Library Service conference in Portland, Maine. The Coordinator and the Large Print Librarian have attended the four-day orientation session at the National Library Service offices in Washington, DC. The Coordinator and Large Print Librarian have also attended meetings of the Consortium of User Libraries (CUL) which involve a significant learning component. The Coordinator has attended the annual trainings of the State Rehabilitation Council of the Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired (SRC-DBVI) as well as registering for a course in exceptionality in the classroom due to many questions from parents of children with visual and learning disabilities. In an effort to provide training to librarians throughout the state, MSL Outreach participated as requested in day-long training sessions of the on the ADA and assistive technology in the districts. MSL Outreach also presented programs on assistive technology workstations and library services to people with disabilities at the annual Maine Libraries Conference.

Outreach staff have exhibited and presented, and done public awareness wherever possible. These activities include statewide airing of NLS-sponsored public service announcements, distribution of NLS and locally-produced

brochures and bookmarks, displays and collaboration with other Maine State Library activities, public libraries, and other organizations, including visits to four assisted living centers, exhibits at three library meetings/conferences, six visits to citizen groups and two visits to schools. Talking Books Plus participation has remained relatively static; however, Books By Mail registration grew from 3,525 active users in March 2004 to 5,203 in December 2006. Approximately 50 – 60 new individuals sign up for Books By Mail each week.

Activity 3.2: Develop a clearinghouse of assistive technology resources.

Strategy 3.2.1. Identify components for a model library assistive workstation, identify recipient libraries, install the workstations, and organize public information events around the technology.

Activities

Public libraries with service populations of 6,000 or more received and installed screen reader technology.

Desired Outcome

Outreach Services users will have access to screen reading software and a lending library of assistive devices.

Indicators of Success

The Outreach/Special Services Coordinator networks with colleagues online via listservs and at American Library Association meetings. She also provides information on assistive technology via Maine library-related listservs. Conversations and research into this area have not yet resulted in specific action or dedication of funds. Nevertheless, this will remain an active goal.

Strategy 3.2.2. Participate in statewide public relations initiative based on The Campaign for America's Libraries.

Activities

During the 2002 fiscal year, a Library Awareness Campaign Committee developed a logo, strategy, and web site (Mainelibraries.com) to promote libraries. The site includes a database where residents can search for libraries, by type of library, type of programming, or geographic region. Libraries can change their own information at any time. The campaign was introduced to Maine librarians at fall 2002 regional meetings. The State Library formed a partnership with Children's Theater of Maine to include the web site for Mainelibraries.com in advertising for its production of *Stella Luna*. The first

campaign press release was mailed to all Maine media outlets in December 2002. In February 2003, online newspaper Mainetoday.com donated \$10,000 of advertising for one year. Free graphic design services were offered to libraries to incorporate the campaign into their public relations materials. Campaign banners and bookmarks were distributed to libraries and at statewide events. In April 2003, Governor Baldacci highlighted the campaign in a press conference at the State Library. The May 2003 issue of the *Maine Townsman*, published for municipal officials, featured articles about Maine libraries.

During the 2003 fiscal year, Governor and Mrs. Baldacci spoke at a press conference proclaiming Maine Libraries Week in January 2004. Campaign public service announcements were broadcast over Maine radio stations. Posters featured Maine citizens whose lives were changed because of their local libraries. Maine Revenue Services promoted libraries in its state income tax booklet. Between March and September 2004, the three MRLS set up a publicity committee with representation on the statewide Library Awareness Campaign Committee. Maine newspapers published guest columns about libraries. The Committee developed a public relations packet and posted it on the campaign web site.

Desired Outcome

Improved public awareness of library services to the blind, visually impaired, physically disabled, and geographically isolated.

Indicators of Success

5,158 residents who cannot access library services due to geographic isolation or disability have been able to request materials and resources from the Maine State Library Books By Mail program. Participation in the program has doubled in four years.

Libraries of all types are involved in the campaign, not just public libraries. In 2003, 75 libraries contributed to the Mainelibraries.com web site; 70 web sites link to Mainelibraries.com.

Between February and September 2004, the site received 10,000 hits.

Sales of items promoting the Maine Libraries Campaign included 250 bumper stickers, 100 mugs, and 3,000 bookmarks.

More than 40 libraries requested free graphic design services offered by a campaign public relations firm.

In the 2003 LSTA report, the Maine State Library staff wrote: “Maine city and town officials were reminded of the role of libraries and introduced to current issues and services... Public awareness of Maine library resources was increased... The campaign is making libraries more visible in the state, and it is making libraries feel good about themselves and their critical roles.”

The Maine State Library believes the Mainelibraries.com site is unique. “For the first time in Maine history, a combination of grant money, LSTA, and state support has made possible a thoughtful, professional statewide public awareness campaign for libraries. Governor Baldacci is supporting the campaign and is one of the poster people for “how a library changed my life.”

In interviews and focus groups, librarians noticed increased awareness and also recognized the need to continue trying to reach people in small towns:

“There has been a major push to reach people who have disabilities through programs such as Talking Books. There’s been a good bit of publicity. Those services are becoming more widely known. The project “Libraries are for Everyone” through the different regional libraries has brought information about libraries to the public. They’ve done a lot of PR about things libraries offer in addition to books.”

“The hardest part of all of this is PR and making everyone aware. There are such tiny towns. It’s hard to get everyone to know what’s available and then be a part of it.”

“I really love ‘Value of Public Libraries.’ The calculator is a fantastic tool.”

Activity 3.3: Develop and promote a volunteer pilot program to bring large print books to assisted living centers throughout the state.

Efforts to develop a single pilot program prototype for providing homebound service in Maine resulted in the identification of several successful model programs already in existence. Based on a survey and study of existing homebound programs in Maine, a number of already-existing models were identified and a training module about strategies to implement them were presented at the Maine Libraries Conference in 2004. The training resulted in an online tutorial that is available to libraries at:

<http://www.maine.gov/msl/outreach/homebound/index.htm>

Also as a result of the study it was decided that the most effective way to support existing efforts to serve homebound people in Maine was to open up Books By Mail to people whose disabilities cause them to be homebound.

Strategy 3.3.1. Organize volunteers to provide staffing for programs such as recording state and regional publications for Talking Book distribution.

Desired Outcome and Indicators of Success See IV: Progress in Showing Results of Library Initiatives or Services – Outcome-Based Evaluation

Activity 3.4: Create partnerships with an existing service group (e.g., Rotary Club) and or create an auxiliary Friends of Library Access/Outreach Services group.

Strategy 3.4.1. Form relationships with local service clubs and create a Friends of Outreach Services.

Activities

In 2004-05, the State Library reported that a Friends of Maine Library Access was forming.

Desired Outcome

Supplemental support for the Outreach Services programs.

Indicators of Success

In spite of good efforts, forming a Friends group for all Outreach programs has not proven feasible. Separate advisory groups for Talking Books Plus and Books By Mail are in the process of being developed.

GOAL 4: *Ensure that all Maine residents have convenient and timely access to all Maine libraries and information services through “live” integrated library software, interlibrary cooperation, and resource sharing arrangements.*

Activity 4.1. Provide support for an increased number of Maine libraries to participate in MINERVA providing patrons with up-to-date Internet access to holdings and patron information and ensuring efficient interlibrary loan transactions.

Strategy 4.1.1. Prepare to expand MINERVA with a second server and software. Further enlarge this automated circulation catalog and interlibrary loan system.

Activities

Maine Info Net is the State Library's collective name for its shared catalog and database activities, called **MaineCat**. The statewide catalog combines and links library collections across Maine. A single search scans more than 3 million unique titles and nearly 8 million items. As of mid-2006, 114 libraries, among them all the largest academic and public libraries, were participating. Efforts to add smaller libraries are ongoing, with a goal of eventually reaching 300 libraries of all types. A built-in requesting and transaction management system allows patrons of libraries using a qualifying online system to make online interlibrary loan requests. Library staff members are able to make requests on behalf of their users, as well.

Programs that make up MaineCat include:

- **MINERVA**, a statewide, integrated library system started by the Maine Info Net Project is maintained and funded cooperatively by 40 + participating libraries in association with the Maine State Library. Small libraries have full functionality for between \$2,000 and \$3,000 per year, according to State Library staff. Although no LSTA funds were allocated directly to Minerva, State Library staff were involved in planning and publicizing the system.
- **SOLAR**. Libraries not using another compatible library automation system (like MINERVA or URSUS) participate in online requesting and lending through the Maine Info Net Statewide Catalog by contributing records to the SOLAR. This makes their collections visible to other libraries and patrons.
- **URSUS**. The URSUS online catalog linked the collection of the Maine State Library, University of Maine System, Bangor Public Library, Maine State Archives, and Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library and provided automated circulation and interlibrary loan capabilities.

These linkages allow for the patron with one search to go to all the libraries in the state. Furthermore, the evaluators found that the speed of searches on MaineCat is excellent!

Two other components of Maine Info Net are described in other parts of this report. They are:

- **MARVEL** online databases
- **Van Delivery**

These elements of the MaineCat program are dealt with elsewhere in this report.

Desired Outcome

Expanded access to library resources, expanded sharing of materials and a more efficient, cost effective delivery system.

NOTE: The outcome listed above is a broad one and applies to many of the activities/objectives in the plan. Many of the comments and observations reported under 4.1.1. support the conclusion that other strategies have been successfully implemented.

Indicators of Success

Table 3: Maine Cat Activity	2004	2005	2006
Interlibrary loan - Loans among MINERVA libraries	30,000	130,000	200,000+
Interlibrary loan-Borrowing Requests among MINERVA libraries	90-95% requests fulfilled	Records are retained for only two months	
MINERVA participating libraries	30	45	55
SOLAR participating libraries	15	20	25
URSUS participating libraries	11	11	11
Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) members—federal e-rate years	250	259	227
Maine Cat participating libraries	80+	58	114

Two hundred forty-one public libraries are included in the e-rate application for 2007.

In the online survey of librarians, Maine Info Net rated 4.36 and Minerva rated 4.2 out of 5. Respondents agreed that:

- Interlibrary loan works well in Maine (4.35)
- Great strides have been made in resource sharing (4.24)

They rated Maine Info Net third and Minerva fourth in importance to their libraries, behind MARVEL and Maine School Library Network. They rated it Minerva fifth in priority for the next five-year LSTA Plan.

Librarians agreed that the libraries in the state were well connected and that the State Library has taken a leadership role in this area.

“The development of the individual consortia such as MINERVA... has been good. When you think about network in Maine, it’s incredible, multitype and on the same platform. Now in the last six months we’ve gotten a lot more direction and structure with the creation of the Maine Info Net Board and hiring an Executive Director.”

“We’re doing very well... in particular because of the formation of the Maine Info Net partnership. This is a big step forward as it seeks to expand the digital library throughout Maine. While not exclusively electronic, that is the focus. The multitype cooperation is outstanding and a real step forward.”

“We’ve made major headway in... access to a number of catalogs with links to major public and college libraries. That’s been of great help in linking people to information regardless of where they live.”

“Resource sharing has improved because of the work that has been done in improving interlibrary loan services.”

“We are a net lender but we are seeing that our patrons are borrowing more and more from other libraries as that gets easier to do.”

“We participate in MINERVA. The doctors love it. It’s incredibly useful. We’re open to the public as well.”

“A lot of us were leery about open requesting. We’ve realized the benefits. Satisfaction of users has never been higher.”

“We can access any book in the state. We can’t borrow directly on computer, but we can request from the library.”

Some worried that the pace of MINERVA’s growth was straining resources:

“...there was too fast a push to add libraries rather than consolidate gains. In five years, the system has grown to 60

libraries. Every time a library is added, the database is compromised.”

“We want into MINERVA but are discouraged because there seems not to be enough people to manage the system. Adding libraries has ground to a halt.”

“The system is running on dated technology. It’s more friendly to IT whizzes. I want this for my patrons and I’m worried about my staff being able to handle it.”

“The perception is that there has never been adequate training or user tools.”

For some, the cost of MINERVA was still seen as being too high:

“We can’t afford MINERVA. I have a volunteer for tech support.”

“Libraries that can afford to be on MINERVA have access to more. We go on URSUS to find out where things are, but ILL is costly in staff time and postage.”

One focus group recommended that the interlibrary loan structure, including Area Resource Centers, be reexamined:

“The technology has changed, and yet the system developed during the 70s and 80s remains unchanged. Technology is grafted on top of an obsolete structure.”

Strategy 4.1.2. Publicize library automation and interlibrary loan services statewide to make residents aware of their options to search the OPAC, place ILL requests, and renew materials online.

Activities

A number of local libraries actively publicize online requesting and lending services. Fifty thousand InfoNet brochures have been printed to mail to each Maine library (public, special, academic and school) with information about MaineCat, MINERVA, SOLAR and URSUS. The MARVEL! Program and WiFi availability are also promoted in these brochures. A news release for statewide dissemination is being prepared that highlights InfoNet activity during 2006.

Desired Outcome

Expanded access to library resources, expanded sharing of materials and a more efficient, cost effective delivery system.

Indicators of Success

Comments and observations reported under 4.1.1. also support the conclusion that strategy 4.1.2. has been successfully implemented.

Strategy 4.1.3. Provide staff and resources for more training, communication, promotion, and data processing for the holdings database and MINERVA.

Activities

The new InfoNet Director began work on May 1, 2006. The Board's first meeting was on August 9, 2006. A Board planning meeting facilitated by Arnold Hirshon of NELINET was held at the University of Southern Maine on September 18, 2006. A strategic plan with goals and activities/objectives resulted from this meeting. The Board has completed its bylaws, elected officers, and set up a committee structure. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.maine.gov/infonet/>

Desired Outcome

Expanded access to resources, expanded sharing of materials and a more efficient, cost effective delivery system.

Indicators of Success

2003 report: "hundreds of library staff can serve their governing authorities and the informational and recreational needs of their patrons more effectively and efficiently with increased knowledge of topics listed above. Post-training evaluations show changes in knowledge and skill and intent to change attitudes and behavior.

2004 report: "Many of the librarians who attended consultant-facilitated workshops or meetings voiced a need to collaborate more with other school and public libraries and to communicate better with their local communities."

Additional Information

Maine’s regional library districts also contribute significantly to the ability of local libraries and library staff to access resources and to serve the public. Following is some information regarding the importance of the training and consultation assistance provided by the regional library districts:

The table below (Table 4) summarizes the activities of Maine Regional Library Districts:

Table 4: Regional Library District Activities	2003-04	2004-03	2005-06
Consultations: CMLD	177	175	193
NMLD	238	303	445
SMLD	205	260	144
Visits: CMLD	40	18	11
NMLD	33	41	31
SMLD	78	58	61
Professional collection circulation: CMLD	93	75	103
NMLD	164	219	248
SMLD	159	134	126
Workshops offered: CMLD	19	19	14
NMLD	29	27	21
SMLD	44	37	42
Individual workshop participants: CMLD	552	242	201
NMLD	422	286	264
SMLD	639	557	781

Indicators of Success

Maine Regional Library Districts rated 4.26 out of 5.0 on the online survey of library staff. The State Library reported “consistent praise” for the resources, expertise, and education that the three MRLS consultants brought to Maine libraries.

District consultants rated 4.15 and Library Development Office consultants 3.91 out of 5.0 on the online survey. Their comments were mostly positive:

“The consultant in the State Library for schools is extremely important in developing facilities and policies.”

“Regional consultants work well. Librarians get to know them and are comfortable with them.”

“As a relative newcomer, I was surprised to see the organization and impact of the state consultants. Sometimes almost too much CE is offered.”

“The state’s electronic linkages are fabulous... there is room for improvement. The district consultants’ roles have a lot of potential towards that improvement. Focus of library consultants could be more on interlibrary linkages. They could each have a specialty that’s not limited to their district, for example, youth services, and serve as a role model for the entire state. Another whose passion is electronic resources. Another whose specialty is fund raising.”

“Consultants are knowledgeable in their own territory and beyond.”

“Consultant staff is excellent. In the past we’ve used consultant help for facility planning and evaluation.”

“Without our district consultants, I wouldn’t know how to deal with political issues. I wouldn’t know about professional development opportunities that are affordable. Professional development indirectly benefits our patrons because we’re better librarians. The consultant also brings opportunities closer to us... Without the consultants, I’m not sure we would have contact with other libraries or be aware of the strength of other libraries and share resources in that way.”

“They are our lifeline with political issues and other challenges. Without being able to pick up the phone, we’d be dealing with tough patron and community issues all by ourselves.”

“Although it was a pain in the neck to do the WebJunction thing [Tech Atlas], it was helpful.”

Focus group members appreciated help with technology planning:

“TechAtlas is encouraging to see through WebJunction.”

Some felt that there was variation in the quality of consulting:

“Consulting is an uneven service. There are some consultants who do an above-excellent job; others are weak.”

Others noted that the consultant staff was too small:

“The State has a small core staff of dedicated people. The core won’t be able to sustain indefinitely. Maine is such a big state... Perhaps the state could use four or five additional people. When something goes wrong now, there is an upheaval in scheduling—when, for example, a van driver leaves.”

“They are very dedicated, but we’re concerned about the workload for the small staff.”

Comments on workshop evaluation forms provide anecdotal evidence of increased knowledge and changed behavior. MSL has actively sought to connect staff development activities with outcomes by urging CE participants to indicate what they will do as a result of participating in the workshop/event. Examples of responses included:

“I will update/enter information on Mainelibraries.com website.”

“I will start county-wide publicity for public awareness campaign.”

“I will look at my library and assess areas to increase accessibility and inform trustee of major concerns.”

“I will look into assistive reading technology.”

“I came away with very good ideas for after-school programming.”

“I will provide an Internet class for patrons.”

In the online survey, librarians were slightly positive toward videoconferencing (3.19 out of 5.0). They were neutral on the statement “CE opportunities available to me/my staff are adequate,” rating it 3.02, where 5 was strongly agree and 1 was strongly disagree.

In the focus groups, some participants felt that continuing education was minimal and could be improved, especially in the northern part of the state:

“What CE? We don’t have a lot.”

“Consultants do as fine a job as they can with the resources they have. There’s room for more CE spread around the state.”

“Good stuff but I can’t always get there.”

“There are many things I’d like to attend in Southern Maine Library District—reader’s advisory, cluster meetings... In the Northern Maine Library District, we don’t have that. There are fall and spring meetings. If you miss that meeting, there isn’t something to pick up.”

“I’d like to see more meetings with our district consultant. We used to have one every other month. We should be talking about TABOR. What should we do?”

Others questioned the role of the State Library, Maine Library Association, and others in CE and requested planning and leadership from the State Library:

“CE is very lacking and the Maine State Library needs to take a stronger initiative to reinstate.”

“CE is slapdash. No long-range plan.”

“We need statewide focus.”

For the next five years, they agreed that more work was needed on continuing education. They suggested that CE focus on:

- Addressing the change from print to electronic format
- Helping the public access electronic resources—Maine Info Cat and MARVEL
- A more formal way to educate support staff and people who don’t have professional education
- Develop a new generation of leaders
- Models for local and regional partnering: *“I’m not sure I would know how to begin developing business partnerships.”*

They suggested a different model might be needed, perhaps videoconferencing:

“There’s got to be a way we don’t need to be there. Is there some technology to help us?”

“Offer online classes. They haven’t offered any.”

Among the eight options offered on the web survey of library staff, District Reference and Resource Center Libraries received the lowest rating (3.65) in terms of meeting needs of libraries and residents. In another survey question, respondents agreed, albeit rather weakly (3.47 out of 5.0), that collections were up to date.

One interviewee commented:

“Need more money to update a professional collection.”

Others discussed the structure of interlibrary loan and questioned whether the Area Reference & Resource Centers were still supportable given the technology now in use:

“There is no purpose now in large collections. Let a book find its audience. The need for duplicate titles is dropping.”

“At Norwood, we relied heavily on the Reference and Referral Center. When we became part of MINERVA that changed.”

Strategy 4.1.4. Provide “new innovations and annual update” session as part of the annual Maine Libraries Conference, which involves in excess of 500 Maine library professionals.

Activities

Although not specifically labeled “new innovations and annual update,” programs that qualify under this strategy are held at each annual Maine Libraries Conference and often at the Council meetings required twice a year in each district.

Examples from the 2004 Maine Libraries Conference:

- Join Solar: Enter the Maine InfoNet Orbit
- Laptops and Librarians: Staying Connected
- Electronic Journal Management
- Maine InfoNet: Five Years In
- Maine Memory Network
- Web Usability
- Computer Assessability and Assistive Technology
- Selling Books on E-Bay
- Walk-In Wireless at Your Library: How to do IT
- Beyond the Net
- Managing Change in Turbulent Times

Examples from the 2006 Maine Libraries Conference:

- The “New” Maine InfoNet
- Google Takes Over the World
- How to Use TechAtlas for Technology Planning
- TechAtlas Troubleshooting: Questions and Answers
- Maine Memory Network

SMLD Fall Council Meeting October 2006:

- Gaming and Its Effect on Learners
- WebJunction and Open Source
- MARVEL! What’s New
- Podcasting Basics
- Wikkis, Blogs, and MySpace
- New Gadgets, Devices and Technologies for Libraries
- RSS, Blogs and Podcasting Basics

Desired Outcome

To share information about new technologies and services and to learn from Maine librarians.

Indicators of Success

See 4.1.4.

Strategy 4.1.5. Develop and begin implementation of a plan for the smallest libraries in the Books-by-Mail service areas to become a part of the automated full management system.

Activities

InfoNet is actively preparing for the introduction of SOLAR Express, probably in April 2007. Express will be a “trial-size” version of SOLAR, the MaineCat entry-point to MaineCat request and lending for libraries that do not use an INN-Reach-compatible online system. Unlike full SOLAR, SOLAR Express only allows requesting from the three Area Reference and Resource Centers. However, it does not require that a library loan their holdings and make them available for lending either.

SOLAR Express can be deployed with limited central staff and relatively little effort on the part of very small libraries. The hope is that it will bring large numbers of libraries “in the door” of InfoNet services while bypassing potential choke points on the staffing/training side. Once local staff and users have had

experience with the simple SOLAR Express software, State Library staff expect they will want to gain access to the benefits of full SOLAR participation.

Libraries in very small towns, most of which, nevertheless, have an Internet connection adequate to use SOLAR Express, are the prime target of the SOLAR Express effort.

Note, however, that full participation in online lending and borrowing through MaineCat is not the same as participation in a “full library management system,” e.g., Minerva. Minerva runs on a software platform and with an architecture that requires local staff resources – time and cataloging expertise mainly – that are frequently unavailable in the smallest libraries. If anything, Minerva is trending away from a service suitable for the smallest libraries, rather than toward that objective.

Desired Outcome

Expanded access to resources and expanded sharing of materials.

Indicators of Success

Efforts are underway to encourage participation in SOLAR Express.

Strategy 4.1.6. Continue to develop statewide access to databases, with the goal of providing a seamless interface for searching all OPACs and databases simultaneously.

For Activities, Outputs, and Outcomes, see Section III of the report on the MARVEL program.

Strategy 4.1.7. Develop criteria, examine collections for unique materials, and establish a digitization project which will provide online access to materials.

Activities

The following language is from “An Act to Provide Essential Library Resources to All Maine Communities.” This draft legislation is now before Maine’s 123rd legislature.

Digital Preservation: Digitally preserve unique, historically significant state and local documents, images, and media for statewide access (\$100,000).

Funding will digitize many of the state's unique and valuable documents, maps, photographs, and rare books. Digitization will provide online access to all and will ensure permanency.

In addition, the Maine State Library is collaborating with the Maine Historical Society on an IMLS grant that would allow 18 public libraries to obtain equipment and training to digitize significant local history information.

Desired Outcome

Expanded access to resources, expanded sharing of unique materials.

Indicators of Success

The success of this initiative is dependent on the passage of the legislation referenced above and on the receipt of grant funding.

Goal 5: Improve efficiency and cost effectiveness of resource sharing among Maine libraries.

Activity 5.1. Identify the most cost-effective, efficient statewide delivery system.

Strategy 5.1.1. Establish a committee to develop the most efficient, effective statewide delivery system possible for Maine, including determining routes and frequency of delivery per site.

Activities

Dean Corner, Director of Reader and Information Services, served as the conduit between public libraries, the Director of Maine InfoNet and the Maine State Library Budget Director in designing an RFP to meet the delivery needs of public libraries as indicated in the survey carried out by his predecessor. Much of his correspondence with and feedback from libraries was carried out over MELIBS, our State of Maine library listserv. The following legislative request is from "An Act to Provide Essential Library Resources to All Maine Communities," now before the 123rd legislature: "Delivery System: Support community-to-community van delivery of library books and other research materials among libraries agreeing to share resources (\$300,000). This legislation will support the interlibrary loan van delivery system."

Desired Outcome

Development of an RFP and the completion of an RFP process leading to the establishment of a successful delivery system. Ultimate outcome is expanded sharing of materials.

Indicators of Success

A survey was done in 2005 to assess public library delivery system needs. A new RFP for delivery services RFP was issued in 2006. The resulting contract included the following significant changes: Sites are charged for pick ups and not for deliveries. Sites are charged by the number of days per week that they receive delivery service and not by the number of bags of materials delivered.

Activity 5.2. Implement a statewide delivery system based on the report of the Delivery System committee, monitoring and adjusting as needed.

Activities

The Maine State Library instituted a statewide van delivery system connecting 114 public and academic libraries. The State Library's consulting staff participated in design and implementation of the service. Delivery costs are paid by participating library, which are able to choose the number of deliveries per week and pay an average of \$11.50 per delivery.

Desired Outcome

Improved faster access to materials statewide for all citizens.

Indicators of Success

In the online survey, librarians ranked affordable van delivery as the top priority, rating it 4.45 on a scale of 5.0.

Affordable van delivery rated fourth in priority for the next five-year LSTA Plan, behind MARVEL, professional development, and technology support.

Libraries that participate in the delivery service are positive:

"I am thrilled to be able to provide our patrons with the materials we can in a timely fashion, thanks to cooperation amongst the libraries in the state of Maine! Van delivery service makes this possible."

"We support a very robust physical delivery system."

“The van saves time and money for us... Van delivery should be sustained and more resources go toward keeping it affordable.”

“Van delivery is crucial for making MINERVA work... Our patrons tell me they aren’t limited by our collection. They can easily and quickly get what they want.”

Survey comments indicate that the current cost, for some small libraries, is still too high and that not being on the route also limits their access to potential lenders:

“The van service, even on a once-a-week basis, is out of our reach, and some libraries are not lending to groups not on the delivery service.”

“For us van delivery is more expensive because we don’t do a lot of interlibrary loan. We mail. We discourage interlibrary loan by imposing a fee. There were people abusing the system.”

“There would be more equity of access if the state funded delivery.”

Objective 5.3. Collect and disseminate data to the legislature and other interested parties about efficiency improvements and cost savings for local libraries.

Activities

The MARVEL! Database licensing program has clearly generated cost efficiencies. Statewide licensing is much more affordable than each library licensing electronic resources locally. MSL can also point to cost efficiencies derived from resource sharing (ILL) among Maine libraries. The web site has been a cost savings as people now can get directions and basic information without having to call the State Library. Having information on the web has saved staff time and mailings. (e.g., MSL provides information to libraries via listservs – MEINFO-L is a one way only listserv used only by State Library Administrators – a via posting information on our web site. The Maine State Library’ web site includes a “Library Use Value Calculator” that demonstrates cost savings to individual State residents.

Regional Library Systems assist local libraries in their efforts to provide high-quality, cost effective services. The various components of the Maine Info Net

program are also designed to maximize the benefits to users for every dollar invested in library services.

Desired Outcome

Continued financial support for resource sharing activities including the interlibrary loan delivery system.

Indicators of Success

The online survey and focus group comments suggest that local librarians are depending on leadership in partnering from the State Library. On the survey, they disagreed (2.86 out of 5.0) that “The best way to form partnerships is at the local (not the state) level.” Focus group comments confirm this viewpoint, while also showing willingness to contribute local resources:

“I believe that the state should be in the business of providing the networks and systems to make connectivity and resource sharing possible (both funds and staff), but the local institutions should be left to develop their own cooperative agreements to share their resources and provide for the quality and scope of their collections, databases, and training using cooperative funding, staffing, and budgeting.”

“It would help to have a consortium at the state level that could help find a way to work as a group. Or perhaps somebody at the state could develop a system for smaller libraries.”

“There is a great deal of interest in having a statewide library borrowing system.”

“Continue working on the electronic network and linkages that bring all libraries together to serve as many people as possible.”

“The multitype cooperation is outstanding and a real step forward.”

“We’re especially good at linking all types of libraries and developing electronic networks. We could do a little more work on public and private relationships.”

“Regionalization is becoming a priority in Maine. Libraries need to demonstrate that we are very efficient.”

Interviewees and focus group participants also valued state-level partnerships with the New Century Program and the Maine Humanities Council.

In the next few years, they would like to develop an equitable funding formula that would allow creation of a statewide library card.

They need help in partnering at the local and regional levels:

“Partnerships are at the top of my list. We need modeling. If we were partnering more smoothly, it could alleviate some problems.”

“Need to encourage partnerships regionally.”

GOAL 6: Expand easily accessible electronic information sources to all Maine residents.

Activity 6.1. Expand and deliver access to electronic resources.

Strategy 6.1.1. Contract with electronic database vendors (based on survey results) to obtain library and remote access to priority databases.

The MARVEL! database initiative was selected by the Maine State Library as the topic for its more in-depth evaluation. Information on this program can be found in Section III: Results of In-Depth Evaluation.

Strategy 6.1.2. Collaborate in providing funding and acquiring needed databases with the University of Maine System (UMS), Technical College System, Public Utilities Commission, and Department of Education.

The Technical College System relies on and shows a great interest in the selection of MARVEL! databases, however, they no longer contribute any funding to the project. The institutions/agencies are still involved.

Strategy 6.1.3. Cooperate with UMS to provide the Digital Library of Maine consisting of licensed databases and digitized local information resources.

See Section III: Results of In-Depth Evaluation for details about the MARVEL! program.

Activity 6.2. Pay costs for libraries to acquire or share computer systems and telecommunications technologies, encouraging libraries in different areas to establish consortia and share resources.

Activities

Maine School and Library Network. The Maine State Library is an administrative partner with the Maine Department of Education and the Maine School and Library Network (MSLN) which connects all schools and libraries with high-speed lines.

Indicators of Success

In the online survey, librarians gave MSLN a 4.48 out of 5.0 rating in meeting the needs of libraries and residents. They ranked it second in current importance, behind MARVEL, and fifth in priority for the next five-year LSTA Plan. They asked that requirements for membership be streamlined for libraries with limited staff.

In interviews and focus groups, participants were complimentary of MSLN:

“MSLN is vital.”

“It’s always a question of infrastructure—some good and some bad. The good—Maine School and Library Network. The problem is the infrastructure in terms of capacity. In Portland we’re having a very difficult time with bandwidth issues. Some of the heavy school users and larger public libraries are having the same kinds of stresses.”

“MSLN is a very good service for the library I worked in previously. The state provided appropriate technical support. My current library is not taking advantage of this service, but is moving in that direction.”

“The circuit rider (technical support person) was terrific for those who had no help.”

“Nice to know we have back-up and support.”

One focus group participant would like the circuit rider to initiate contact, rather than simply responding:

“Unless you call, they don’t call you. It would be nice if the circuit rider showed up once a year.”

Activity 6.3. Generate statewide publicity to educate the library community and citizens and enable them to utilize these resources.

Activities, Desired Outcome, and Indicators of Success

See 5.3. above.

III. Results of In-depth Evaluation

Methods

The methods of evaluation used in examining the MARVEL program were essentially the same as those used in the rest of this report. The evaluators examined annual LSTA reports, visited the MARVEL web site, gathered information via an online survey of librarians, interviewed State Library staff and librarians, and conducted focus groups. The Findings below include an overview of MARVEL, activities, outputs, and outcomes during the evaluation period.

Findings

The Maine State Library chose to focus its in-depth evaluation on MARVEL, Maine's Virtual Library, because of its statewide impact and the unique cooperative relationship between the State Library and several partners in sponsoring, staffing, and funding the service.

MARVEL provides every resident of Maine with free access to a collection of full text and abstracts from magazines, newspapers and reference books that are credible, reputable resources. MARVEL also provides students, business people, public library patrons, and higher education students and educators the ability to search a number of resources at one time for needed information. The print value of the resources provided in these databases would be in excess of \$500,000 per library.

MARVEL is a collaboration between the Maine State Library, the University of Maine, the State Legislature, and MTEAF (Maine Telecommunications Educational Access Fund) that funds the state-wide licensing of these resources for every library and resident of Maine. The State Library contributes staff who are involved in planning and implementation. Funds from the state legislature pay for MARVEL for libraries that do not meet the filtering requirements of CIPA; e-rate funds pay for libraries that have adopted CIPA filtering requirements.

Activities

Each year the Maine State Library initiates legislation that requests more funding for more databases. This year that request is included in "An Act to Provide Essential Library Resources to All Maine Communities" as follows: "Quality Electronic Publications: Expand information access through statewide licensing of online journals, research data and electronic books which are not available free on the World Wide Web. (\$600,000)." Funding will expand

electronic resources to cover needed subject areas in addition to providing critical resources for research and development.

Outputs

Searches in MARVEL databases, not including Ebsco, increased 32 percent between 2004 and 2005. Table 5 shows individual increases and decreases in each of the databases for which information was reported.

Table 5: MARVEL Statewide Database Usage – Log-ins and Searches	7/04-6/05	7/05 – 6/06	% Change
LOG-INS			
Access Science	1,147	1,083	-6%
Annals of American History	N/A	N/A	N/A
Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries	N/A	N/A	N/A
Business and Company Resource Center	3,537	4,774	35%
Child Abuse, Child Welfare & Adoption Database	N/A	819	N/A
Encyclopedia Britannica	N/A	N/A	N/A
Encyclopedia Britannica School Edition	N/A	N/A	N/A
FSTA: Food Science & Technology Abstracts	678	646	-5%
Gale Literary Databases	15,629	15,453	-1%
**GeoRef	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nature	N/A	N/A	N/A
ProQuest Newspapers	36,162	52,114	44%
Scribners	3,288	2,236	-32%
Twayne	3,880	3,393	-13%
ValueLine	3,916	10,526	169%
Wildlife and Ecology Studies Worldwide	N/A	4,580	N/A
SEARCHES			
Access Science	1,970	2,578	31%
Annals of American History	8,010	7,693	-4%
Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries	13,950	6,566	-53%
Business and Company Resource Center	23,157	29,626	28%
Child Abuse, Child Welfare & Adoption Database	N/A	1,532	N/A
Encyclopedia Britannica	58,352	55,133	-6%
Encyclopedia Britannica School Edition	29,967	59,643	99%
FSTA: Food Science & Technology Abstracts	1,161	1,131	-3%
Gale Literary Databases	25,871	23,607	-9%
GeoRef	N/A	4,593	N/A
Nature	3,888	15,937	310%
ProQuest Newspapers	93,484	123,212	32%
Scribners	2,769	1,822	-34%
Twayne	5,943	5,626	-5%
ValueLine	N/A	N/A	N/A
Wildlife and Ecology Studies Worldwide	N/A	8,564	N/A

During 2005-06, users completed nearly 3 million searches through MARVEL. The vast majority searched through EBSCO databases; other database search totals are included in Table 6.

Table 6: 2005-06 MARVEL Search or Login Totals for Indexes and Databases by Usage from Highest to Lowest	
<i>Indexes or Databases</i>	<i>Usage by Searches or Logins</i>
EBSCO Maine Total Logins	555,426
EBSCO Maine Total *Searches	2,591,636
*Encyclopedia Britannica School Edition	59,643
*Encyclopedia Britannica	55,133
ProQuest Newspapers	52,114
*Nature	15,937
Gale Literary Databases	15,453
ValueLine	10,526
*Annals of American History	7,693
*Aquatic Sciences & Fisheries Abstracts	6,566
Business and Company Resource Center	4,774
*GeoRef	4,593
Child Abuse, Child Welfare & Adoption	4,580
Twayne	3,393
Scribners	2,236
Access Science	1,083
Wildlife and Ecology Studies Worldwide	819
FSTA: Food Science & Technology Abstracts	646

Database usage increased 43 percent between 2004-05 to 2005-06; Table 7 on the next page shows the number of searches from the six Ebsco profile groups—remote users, public libraries, K-12 libraries, University of Maine, University of Southern Maine, and community colleges. The University of Maine accounted for the highest number of searches; searches from schools increased by 52 percent and ranked second; searches from the University of Southern Maine increased 38 percent and ranked third.

Table 7: MARVEL Log-ins and Searches by Type of Institution			
Type of Institution	7/04-6/05	7/05-6/06	Percent Change
Ebsco Maine Logins	586,329	555,426	-5%
Public Library Logins	26,578	31,070	17%
K-12 Libraries Logins	125,185	132,791	6%
Academic/Other Libraries Logins	67,184	72,840	8%
UMS Total Logins	331,241	287,002	-13%
USM Logins	109,493	101,955	-7%
Community Colleges Total Logins	33,681	31,723	-6%
Statewide Grand Total: Logins	654,566	651,050	-1%
Ebsco Maine Searches	1,776,722	2,591,636	46%
Public Libraries Searches	85,656	133,487	56%
K-12 Libraries Searches	405,707	618,245	52%
Academic/Other Libraries Searches	197,952	303,807	53%
UMS Total Searches	918,462	1,267,558	38%
USM Searches	340,745	507,122	49%
Community Colleges Total Searches	159,406	268,539	68%
Statewide Grand Total: Searches	2,045,244	2,915,557	43%

Outcomes

In the online survey conducted for this evaluation, librarians gave MARVEL the highest ranking (4.5 out of 5) of all services in meeting the needs of libraries and residents. MARVEL was also most frequently cited as the “service most important to my library” and was chosen as the top priority for the next five-year plan.

Some open-ended responses on the survey confirm that MARVEL is meeting the needs of librarians and patrons:

“I love MARVEL. I use it and ‘push it’ frequently.”

“My library could never afford MARVEL databases.”

“MARVEL is a wonderful teaching and information tool.”

“Because of LSTA, everyone in the state can access MARVEL online databases.”

Focus group participants also described their use of MARVEL:

“MARVEL is a tremendous asset...For students we find local newspapers of colleges they may be considering... We used on curriculum development.”

“MARVEL is a great equalizer. None could afford it on their own.”

“MARVEL is marvelous... Kids and adults are coming in all the time to take advantage of this service... These services give the library a lot of credibility in the community.”

“The Maine State Library and the University are very important partners.”

State Library reports include stories from librarians about the results of their efforts to introduce MARVEL to a variety of user groups:

- More than 50 nurses from central and southern Maine attended a session to learn to use MARVEL to find articles to share with paraprofessionals in nursing homes. They were amazed at the reliable information they could find quickly and immediately began to e-mail it to their colleagues.
- The instructor presented a workshop on MARVEL to Portland-area school librarians and aides. In the week following the training, the participants prepared instructional materials for their teachers and students; they plan to present workshops on MARVEL themselves in their schools.
- College instructors invited the librarian to show their classes how to use MARVEL. The students immediately applied their research skills to class projects.

Local librarians are important partners in building awareness and use of MARVEL, as a comment in the 2004-05 report demonstrates:

“I will make a point of more aggressively recommending the databases to patrons and students—particularly the magazine articles.”

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

Implementing Outcomes-based Evaluation

The Maine State Library focused its outcomes-based evaluation efforts on the programs included in Outreach Services — Books By Mail, Summer Reading Program, Large Print Books, and Talking Books. All four of these programs provided direct service to users, in contrast to other LSTA-funded State Library programs which support the technological infrastructure for content delivery, continuing education, and other services for which the primary customers are libraries or librarians.

In early 2004, the three regional consultants added a question to the workshop evaluation form asking “Are you likely to implement something at your library that you learned in today’s workshop? If yes, what might you try?” While this might seem to be a very small step toward outcome-based evaluation, this simple question reflects the Maine State Library’s recognition that it is important to try to ascertain what happens as a result of its actions.

In October 2004, Robin Cabot of IMLS presented an overview of OBE to Maine Regional Library System District consultants. OBE was also a topic of discussion at Executive Board meetings in the three Regional Library Districts.

Over the last several years, Outreach Services has developed and disseminated surveys to gather feedback from Books By Mail customers and from patrons using the various components of the Talking Books Plus service. Nearly three-hundred (288) valid responses were received in the most recent Books By Mail survey. More than five-hundred and fifty (563) people responded to a similar survey directed to users of Talking Books Plus.

Many of the questions in both surveys asked customers to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a variety of statements designed to gain insight into the impact that the program has on the lives of users. Including statements such as “Using the library’s services (Talking Books, Descriptive Videos, and/or Large Print) improves the quality of my life” and “With Books By Mail, I feel that I am part of a statewide community” moves MSL’s assessment of their LSTA program toward outcome-based evaluation. For example, one of the outcomes included in the 2003 – 2007 LSTA plan for MSL’s Outreach services was “Otherwise isolated individuals will feel part of a virtual online community that will enrich lives and provide intellectual stimulation. The facts that nearly three-quarters (74.4%) of Talking Books Plus users responding to the survey strongly agreed that the program improves the quality of their life and that over ninety percent (90.4%) of Books By Mail respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the program made them feel

part of a statewide community serves to validate the fact that MSL accomplished what it set out to do.

While users of the outreach services placed a high value on these offerings, it is not surprising that the librarians of the State saw things somewhat differently. In the online survey that the evaluators conducted of members of the library community, the outreach services fell into the second tier of importance, behind MARVEL, MSLN, Maine Info Net, the Maine Regional Library Services. The Summer Reading Program ranked fifth, Large Print Books sixth, Books By Mail seventh, and Talking Books services from the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped eighth. We believe that this is perfectly natural since MSL segments its efforts into services it provides directly and those that are designed to enable libraries to do their job more efficiently.

Furthermore, librarians didn't dismiss the value of MSL's direct services. In interviews and focus groups, librarians recognized that the State Library had outreach goals and had high praise for its outreach efforts. Examples of comments include:

"There has been a major push to reach people with disabilities through programs such as Talk Books. There's been a good bit of publicity. Those services are becoming more widely known."

"The [State Library] does a great job with outreach. I would like to congratulate them."

"Excellent programs, great structure, impassioned librarian pushing them."

"There are many people who would not have library services without the State Library's outreach."

Individual Outreach Services Findings

The State Library chose its Outreach Services as examples of its progress in documenting outcomes. Activities, outputs, and outcomes for the Books By Mail, Large Print, and Talking Books programs are summarized below.

Books By Mail

Activities

Books By Mail is an outreach service of the Maine State Library, designed to help meet the needs of more than 200,000 Maine residents who live in towns without local libraries and to residents of towns with public libraries open fewer than 15 hours per week.

These rural residents may order through an online public access catalog (OPAC), implemented in September 2004, that is part of the statewide consortium (Minerva). Users are able to request anything available from the shared database through the OPAC or receive annotated catalogs in the mail, from which they select and order books. Outbound and return postage is paid by the State Library. Residents may use the service as often as they wish. Reference and readers advisory services are also provided via a toll-free phone number.

In late 2003, the State Library initiated a pilot program to deliver Books By Mail service to people who were homebound with medical disabilities.

Outputs

At the end of the 2003-04 period, the State Library implemented an Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) for Books By Mail, Large Print, and Talking Books users. The catalog allows users to make selections and order materials from any library participating in the Minerva statewide consortium.

<i>Table 8: Books By Mail Usage</i>	<i>2003-04</i>	<i>2004-05</i>	<i>2005-06</i>
Books By Mail individual users	3,867	4,409	5,203
Percent of total eligible population (200,000)	1.9%	2.2%	2.6%
Books By Mail books lent	12,794	21,983	31,926

Outcomes

In early 2005, the Outreach Services Section sent a survey with the Supplement Catalog to Books By Mail patrons to establish a baseline of patron satisfaction. In September 2005, a second survey was posted to the Maine State Library web page; 3,277 copies were mailed to active, registered users. Preliminary results reported in the 2004-05 report indicate that 90 percent of online respondents find that the OPAC makes it easier for them to access Books By Mail. Ninety-five percent said that using Books By Mail improved the quality of their lives and 85 percent would not have access to library materials

without the program. Participation in Books By Mail made 90 percent of respondents feel that they were part of a statewide community; 92 percent report that this program supports their continuing education.

Some typical comments from the survey:

“Thank you. We LOVE Books By Mail!”

“I live in Dyer Brook, way up in Aroostook County. I cannot tell you how much we enjoy the Maine State Library Outreach Services. The new access by Internet is amazing!!! I couldn't believe it would really work and be that easy... I homeschool my four children and there is always a large list of library books that we want and need. I just get online and request them and they arrive a few days later. It is like a miracle. Thank you so much for this service.”

“This Books By Mail is one of the best things that ever happened to me.”

“I cannot say enough about the Books By Mail system! It is WONDERFUL! We live in a small rural town with no library. My children and I daily get online and check out new books. I cannot stress what a wonderful took this is. I would have no access to books without this service. I cannot afford to buy new books and this allows us to read whatever we want...”

“It is wonderful to get books in my mailbox. It restores my faith in libraries and state government...”

In the online survey of the library community conducted by the evaluators late in 2006, librarians rated the Books By Mail service at 4.12 out of 5. In the open-ended comments rating services most important to the library, Books By Mail ranked seventh, behind fifth-ranked summer reading and sixth-ranked Large Print.

Focus group participants mentioned Books By Mail:

We take advantage of Books By Mail, Talking Books, and Summer Reading Program. People call and we direct them to the State's Outreach Services. The staff does a good job of publicizing the service. We get regular updates at district meetings. A lot of residents use services for the blind. We're seeing the need for help for kids with reading disabilities.”

“Pretty good job done for outreach, good publicizing and connecting and coordinating.”

Summer Reading Program

Activities

The Books By Mail program’s participation in the statewide summer reading program provided motivation for improving resource in this area and currently provides an umbrella for the State Library’s membership in the national Collaborative Summer Library Program, which distributes materials and coordinates activities for public libraries throughout the state. The goal is to improve children’s summer reading, minimize summer loss of reading ability, and empower communities to have a robust summer reading offering for local youth. The Summer Reading Program benefits children who are served by outreach services as well as those who reside in communities with libraries.

In 2005, a variety of support activities were offered, including a coloring contest. The summer reading program was extended to all public libraries and several schools, which received manuals, a craft workshop for librarians, a program at the Maine Library Conference, and reading completion certificates.

Outputs

Table 9: Summer Reading Program	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Books By Mail children registered for summer reading program	241	236	215
Percent of BBM children who met reading goals	54%	57%	60%
Maine communities participating in summer reading	130	142	153
Percent of Maine communities participating	49%	“more than 50%”	“more than 50%”
Children participating in community summer reading	4,796	119,760	120,000 est.

Outcomes

In September 2004, the 130 libraries participating in the Books By Mail Summer Reading Program received a survey to distribute to the children in the program, in order to measure their awareness of the statewide program and the extent to which they were motivated to read by the initiative. Seventy-seven percent reported that being part of the program encouraged them to read this year. The survey also indicated that 93 percent of families participating in the program were very satisfied with the books and other materials they received from the Maine State Library Outreach.

A survey respondent complimented the program:

“Thank you for your Summer Reading Program. [Our child] read and read, often to her younger siblings. I read the C. S. Lewis book to all the children evenings...”

In the online survey, librarians rated the Summer Reading Program highly—4.35 out of 5—in addressing needs of those with difficulty using traditional library services. They ranked it fifth among State Library services important to their library.

In focus groups and interviews, public librarians whose libraries participated had positive things to say about the summer reading program. They particularly liked the connection to a statewide effort, statewide promotion, and the savings in cost and time it allowed.

“Our children’s librarian says it is very popular. It’s also a good networking tool. It’s good for kids to know they are part of a statewide effort.”

“The Summer Reading Program is very helpful because it helps tie us into a grant theme with the state at large.”

“The [State Library’s] recent initiative in providing summer reading materials is very much a plus.”

“Helpful for small libraries that don’t have a children’s librarian.”

“Because of the State Library’s help, we are able to provide a Summer Reading Program that includes a couple hundred kids. It saves the library in costs and planning and development. We wouldn’t have the Summer Reading Program we have without the State Library.”

“Reaches a lot of kids who don’t use the library year round.”

“I couldn’t ask for more. It’s got everything in it. I wasn’t really promoting summer reading until I got the stuff from the state. The school likes it a lot.”

“It’s a great timesaver. It would take too much time to develop a program on your own.”

Some use the Summer Reading Program partially:

“...we tie in very loosely. I don’t see a lot of support. I don’t see a lot of libraries using it. Presenters are always in the south.”

Even some whose libraries did not choose to use the program (or use it completely) appreciated its value:

“I’m the kind of person who likes to come up with my own theme, but I know there are people what aren’t able to or don’t want to do that, so the Summer Reading Program helps them. A lot of folks have availed themselves of this service because it gives them an easy way...”

A school media specialist reported that it also helped her indirectly:

“Public librarians come in and promote the summer reading program. It helps us indirectly.”

One interviewee was negative:

“I can’t see that the Summer Reading Program has helped us reach children in our community. I wish there was more statewide PR about it.”

Large Print Books

Activities

The State Library mailed catalogs to residents using the program and maintained a statewide toll-free number for patron use. Young readers were invited to participate in the summer reading program.

An online public access catalog was in development during 2003-04; by 2004-05, it was complete. The State Library’s accessible web site provided enrollment information, links to the national catalog, and online requesting.

Large print collections are also loaned to public libraries.

Outputs

Table 10: Large Print Usage	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Large Print individual users	408	544	580
Large Print library participants	138	102	185
Large Print books lent	33,341	33,387	31,946

Outcomes

No comprehensive outcome data from this audience was reported. Anecdotal comments included in the State Library reports suggest that the service is meeting needs:

“To all those good people in the Large Print Division of the State Library: Many thanks for all the books you have sent me. It sure helps pass the time. I was 97 in October 2004. My only recreation is reading and doing crossword puzzles. Thanks again.”

“During my recent health crisis, your efforts kept me supplied with reading material that helped me get through it all.”

“Had a so-so holiday weekend. Read most of it! No family, no barbeque, but that’s OK, I have my books.”

“I would like to give a special thanks to the gentleman I spoke to on the phone the last time. He was wonderful and the books he sent me were perfect.”

“I have received large print for a few years... I am visually impaired because of advanced macular degeneration... I am very thankful for this service.”

On the online survey completed by librarians, the Large Print Books Program received the highest rating—4.36 out of 5—among Outreach Services.

In interviews and focus groups, librarians commented on the Large Print service:

“We have a decent-size large print collection. Quite a few times we have referred people to the state/federal program, so I think that it is worthwhile.”

“Three years ago, I would have said the large print collection was terrible, but they are addressing that...”

“There has been a major push to reach people who have disabilities through programs such as Talking Books. There’s been a good bit of publicity. Those services are becoming more widely known.”

“I know of many instances where people are getting books and are delighted with the service. [The books] come quickly.”

Talking Books

Activities

The Maine State Library continued to supply talking books statewide, as Maine’s regional provider for the National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS); the Director of Outreach Services serve as the liaison to NLS.

A statewide toll-free number allowed patrons to contact the Library.

The State Library distributes a patron handbook explaining the program to all new talking book patrons upon request. Children are invited to participate in the summer reading program sponsored by the State Library. In an effort to reach more readers, promotional efforts continued, including statewide airing of NLS-sponsored public service announcements, distribution of NLS brochures, displays, and collaboration with other Maine State Library activities, public libraries, and other organizations. The staff spoke to groups around the state, published a newsletter, and developed an interactive web site.

Outputs

Table 11: Talking Books Usage	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Talking Book individual users	2,726	2,807	2,850
Talking Book organizational participants	141	527	544
Talking Books lent	118,512	113,877	114,630

Outcomes

Talking Books service of the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped rated a 4.18 out of 5 on the online survey of librarians.

Interview and focus group comments about Talking Books were positive:

“I know there are talking books and services for the blind.”

“Service to the blind works very, very well.”

“Talking Books/Large Print services are very responsive to suggestions for changes.”

“My mom uses it and it works slick. Descriptive videos are also a good service.”

The Maine State Library recognizes that it still has a long way to go before outcome-based evaluation becomes the norm for the assessment of its programs, nevertheless, actions to date demonstrate both an understanding of the basic concepts of OBE and a willingness to work toward the integration of OBE in Maine’s LSTA program.

V. Lessons Learned

Findings

Between FY 2003 and FY 2005, the Maine State Library focused a substantial amount of its efforts on the improvement of direct library service to the 200,000 individuals who do not have access to a local public library and to individuals who have a disability that limits their ability to access traditional library services. (**Goals 1, 2, and 3**). The State Library added its Books By Mail, Large Print Books, and Talking Books collections to its online catalog, improved the accessibility of the catalog, and widely promoted the availability of State Library services. In addition, it creatively leveraged the participation of the new audiences for these services in the statewide summer reading program.

The State Library also showed some initial progress in measuring end-user outcomes. Furthermore, it appears that plans for a more robust program of outcome-based evaluation are underway particularly as they relate to outreach services.

Another key accomplishment of the Maine State Library during this period was in the expansion of technology-supported services for libraries (**Goals 4, 5, and 6**). The State Library continued to participate in the partnership that coordinates the Maine School and Library Network and continues to encourage broader participation in this effort. Thanks to planning and technical support from the State Library, the catalogs of libraries participating in several consortia (MINERVA, URSUS, and SOLAR) were linked so that users across the State can have convenient access to holdings within all three systems. The State Library developed and implemented a statewide van delivery service, which is available at a reasonable cost to participating libraries. It also coordinated the MARVEL online database. The State Library acted as a catalyst by providing the initial funding for these services (with the exception of MSLN, the result of the Maine library world's intervention in a Maine Public Utilities Commission rate case), and was able to leverage its resources by partnering with other agencies in order to integrate and expand the services.

The financial resources that are available to support library services in Maine are quite limited. Local funding is meager, LSTA funding is in the bottom tier when compared to other states and support from the State of Maine is modest. In spite of this, Maine has accomplished a great deal in a state that presents major challenges in terms of size and population density. In the opinion of the evaluators, the Maine State Library has done a masterful job of maximizing the impact of all of the funding sources, including LSTA, that are available to it.

It is somewhat ironic to note that the only one of the six LSTA purposes that Maine's 2003 – 2007 LSTA Plan did not address directly was “developing

public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.” In fact, the evaluators found many examples that illustrate that operating in a collaborative mode is second nature for the Maine State Library. In the very best spirit of the LSTA program, partnerships are built into almost every initiative that MSL undertakes.

In conducting statewide LSTA evaluations in the past, Himmel & Wilson has occasionally been critical of the practice of spending all or most of the LSTA funds internally. However, we find it difficult to disapprove of this element of MSL’s handling of LSTA funding for several reasons. First, the total amount of Federal funding available to MSL is rather limited; dispersing any significant amount of LSTA funding through a subgrant program would leave little money for tackling important statewide concerns. Second, Main does an excellent job of leveraging the impact of its LSTA funds. There are multiple good examples of how LSTA has been used in concert with State, local, and private funds to accomplish something that would not have happened otherwise. Finally, the Maine State Library has done an excellent job of identifying needs, prioritizing needs, and designing strategies to address them.

Following is a series of recommendations that grow out of the evaluators examination of Maine’s LSTA program. They are offered in the spirit of providing suggestions for how an already excellent program might be made even better.

Recommendations

1. Continue priority statewide programs that help libraries provide better service—MARVEL, consortial catalogs (MINERVA, URSUS, and SOLAR), and van delivery.
2. Continue the State Library’s leadership of state-level partnerships that leverage the impact of LSTA funding to meet priority state needs.
3. Investigate ways to extend van delivery to all libraries, in order to provide a stepping stone for small libraries to participate in resource sharing, with all its benefits and responsibilities.
4. Consider restructuring regional consulting and collections systems to take advantage of changing technology.
5. For the next planning cycle, build outcomes evaluation strategies into every LSTA activity and clearly allocate responsibility for collecting, reporting, and analyzing data. This is especially important in the library development/consulting area, since such a large portion of LSTA funds

are spent in this area and activities tend to blur between state and federal priorities.

6. Continue developing outcomes measures for Outreach Services. Maine is well-positioned to become a national leader in this area.
7. Examine ways to increase the coordination of professional development activities for library staff in the state and implement a program that is closely aligned with the goals of the 2008 – 2012 LSTA Plan.
8. For consulting and professional development services, develop a method for recording evidence of attendance, knowledge or skill learned, as well as follow-up assessment of implementation and improved customer outcomes.
9. Enhance professional development in areas related to LSTA and state goals, using a variety of face-to-face and online solutions to reach remote participants.
10. Examine ways to improve differentiation of “branded” programs (such as URSUS, Minerva, SOLAR, Marvel, etc.) of State Library programs so that librarians, trustees, and policy makers can more clearly identify them.
11. Continue frequent formal and informal communication to inform Maine librarians and their customers about services available.

VI. Brief Description of Evaluation Process

Evaluation Methodology

In keeping with the spirit of cooperation that pervades the LSTA program, Maine's evaluation was carried out as part of a cooperative effort undertaken by six northeastern states — Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Vermont. A Request for Proposal covering the LSTA evaluations for the six states was issued through the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE) with the Maine State Library acting as the administrative and fiscal agent for the effort. By taking this approach, the six states hoped to achieve a high level of efficiency in their evaluation efforts and to benefit from a heightened awareness of the strengths, weaknesses and innovative aspects of LSTA programs in other states in the region.

Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants was selected to carry out the five-year evaluation of LSTA for six COSLINE states as the result of a competitive bidding process. The evaluation methodology proposed by Himmel & Wilson was designed to assess each state's implementation of the LSTA program individually using a similar set of data gathering techniques and to report the findings of the evaluation process using a standardized report format.

The considerable demographic variation between and among the six states as well as the differing approaches the six states had taken in developing their five-year plans required some modification of the process from state to state; however, the evaluators believe that the cooperative approach has resulted in some economies of scale as well as providing a number of insights that might not have emerged if each state had conducted a completely separate assessment of their LSTA program.

In addition to evaluating each state's progress toward the goals outlined in their five-year plans, the process also represents one piece of a coordinated effort to ensure that LSTA met or exceeded the expectations of the elected officials who authorized the program. Furthermore, the assessment process served to determine how LSTA makes a difference in the quality of library services available to the residents of each state. Because library services in each state exist in unique environments, each state's plan *should* differ both in its focus and in terms of the nature of the programs that were supported with LSTA dollars. At the same time, the LSTA purposes provide a framework that serves to create common themes among the states.

The evaluation progressed through five phases that involved a variety of stakeholders and a mix of quantitative and qualitative data-gathering methods.

The phases were:

- Discovery
- Data/information Gathering
- Data/Information Analysis
- Synthesis
- Reporting

Following is a brief description of the efforts that took place in each phase of the project.

Phase I: Discovery

State library liaison: Himmel & Wilson, the consultants scheduled a telephone conference call involving representatives of all six states on July 17, 2006 and asked that each state name a liaison to act as the primary point of contact between the consultants and their states' library agency. Linda Lord, Deputy State Librarian, served as Maine's liaison.

State library questionnaire: Prior to the conference call, Himmel & Wilson created a web-based questionnaire in which the state liaison identified specific materials, reports, and websites that could be made available for the consultants to review, including reports to IMLS and valuable internal documents (such as minutes from advisory committees and sub-grant evaluations) that would be useful in gaining an understanding of a particular state's approach to LSTA

The web-based questionnaire also asked the state liaison to identify specific time periods that would be particularly good or particularly bad for site visits to the state library agency, focus groups, and other on-site events. This assisted the consultants in their effort to develop site visit schedules that were relatively free of conflicts with important events that might impede the ability of key stakeholders to participate, while taking advantage of statewide meetings such as library conferences or large training events. Addressing scheduling conflicts and opportunities early in the process was critical to carrying out this ambitious project in a timely fashion.

In addition to calendar information, the state liaison identified general locations, based on regional traffic patterns, topography, and even personalities, which might be well suited as focus groups sites and recommended libraries that had good meeting facilities, parking, and access to major highways.

Phone calls with State Library liaisons: Shortly after the conference phone call, the consultants called the state liaison to refine the list of background

documents, to select focus group sites, and to begin to refine the calendar for work to be conducted on-site.

Review of background documents: The consultants reviewed background documents, revisited the LSTA plan, examined the State Program Reports submitted to IMLS, and reread the last five-year LSTA evaluation. The consultants also reviewed supplemental materials and information that each state provided.

Phase II: Data/Information Gathering

Site visit to state library: After completing the background review, the consultants scheduled a site visit to Maine to gain a thorough understanding of the scope of its LSTA program and overall library development and service priorities. Bill Wilson visited the state library agency and interviewed:

- J. Gary Nichols, Maine State Librarian
- Linda H. Lord, Deputy State Librarian
- Dean Corner, Director of Reader and Information Services Division
- Janet McKenney, Coordinator of Learning and Technology Services
- Melora Norman, Outreach/Special Services Coordinator
- Sylvia K. Norton, School Library/Technology Planning Coordinator

Development of data collection instruments. In order to gather opinions and personal experiences of a wide array of stakeholders, the consultants developed and refined focus group questions, interview questions, and web surveys during this phase.

Focus groups: Himmel & Wilson Associate Consultant Coral Swanson conducted four focus groups with a total of 24 participants, in the following locations:

- Portland
- Augusta
- Bangor
- Caribou

Map 1 below shows the geographic distribution of the focus groups.



Map 1 – Focus group Locations

A summary report covering the focus groups is attached to this report as Appendix A.

Personal interviews were conducted via telephone with 13 key individuals identified by the MSL administration and staff. The individuals who were interviewed and the organizations with which they are affiliated are listed on the following page.

- Rich Boulet, Director, Blue Hill Public Library, and Vice-President, Maine Library Association
- Teri Caouette, Lincoln Middle School, Portland, and President, Maine Association of School Libraries
- Donna Chale, Warsaw Middle School, Pittsfield, and Second Vice President, Maine Association of School Libraries
- Jo Hipsher, Brunswick High School, and Chair, Central Maine Library District Executive Board

- Suellen Jagels, Eastern Maine Medical Center, Parrott Health Sciences Library; Member, Maine Info Net Executive Board; and Immediate Past Member, Maine Library Commission.
- Nikki Maounis, Director, Rockland Public Library, and President, Maine Library Association
- Barbara McDade, Director, Area Reference and Resource Center, Bangor Public Library
- Nancy McGinnes, Friends of Maine Libraries, Hallowell
- Elizabeth Moran, Director, Camden Public Library, and Immediate Past Chair, Maine Library Commission
- David Nutty, Director of Libraries, University of Southern Maine, and Chair of Maine Info Net Board
- Sonja Plummer-Morgan, Director, Presque Isle Public Library, and Chair, Northeastern Maine Library District Executive Board
- Stephen Podgajny, Director, Area Reference and Resource Center, Portland Public Library
- Joyce Rummery, Dean of University Libraries, University of Maine, and Maine Library Commission

A summary of the interview content is attached to this report as Appendix B.

Web-based surveys: One hundred sixty-seven individuals responded to a web-based survey designed to gather responses to services and programs that are supported with LSTA funds in Maine. The vast majority of respondents were from public libraries. Nearly half of the respondents were directors; reference librarians were the second-largest group of respondents. The small size of many of Maine's public libraries was reflected in the survey respondents. More than half of respondents reported three or fewer FTE staff in their libraries and sixty-two percent of respondents reported materials budgets of \$25,000 or less.

Copies of the survey frequencies and open-ended comments are included in Appendix C.

Phase III: Data/Information Analysis

During this phase, consultants compiled survey results and focus group and interview notes, as well as statistics. They made follow-up contacts with the state library liaison and other key state library agency staff and collected and reviewed additional documentation that had been identified in the course of the data gathering effort.

Phase IV: Synthesis

The consultants synthesized the data and information collected. They shared draft reports of the various data gathering efforts such as the web survey results with the state liaison to make sure the data gathering met the expectations of the state agency and fully complied with IMLS requirements.

Phase V: Reporting

The consultants completed the draft final evaluation report and provided it to the State Library agency and provided an opportunity for State Library staff to offer comments, corrections, and editorial suggestions. Upon receipt of the input from the State Library agency, the consultants produced the final version of the evaluation in a format suitable for forwarding to IMLS.

Responsibilities of Evaluation Team Members

The evaluation process was carried out by Himmel & Wilson's partners, Dr. Ethel E. Himmel and Mr. William J. "Bill" Wilson, with the assistance of two experienced associate consultants.

Himmel acted as principal consultant for the project and was responsible for the design of evaluation tools such as surveys and focus group and interview questions. She also coordinated the review and analysis of background documentation. Himmel conducted focus groups and interviews, analyzed data and was involved in writing the six evaluation reports.

Wilson participated in nearly all of the evaluation efforts as well, including the review of the background documentation, conducting focus groups and interviews, and creating web surveys that were used to gather information from a variety of stakeholders in each state. Wilson took the lead on the analysis of how dollars were distributed and assumed primary responsibility for the creation of maps and graphs that illustrated trends and the consultants' findings. Wilson assisted with writing the six evaluation reports.

The Himmel & Wilson partners were assisted by two other experienced consultants, Ms Coral Swanson and Ms Sara Laughlin. Swanson's primary involvement in the project was conducting and reporting on focus group sessions and telephone interviews. Laughlin assisted with evaluation of specific programs and authored portions of the six evaluation reports.

Evaluation Team

Since its founding in 1987, the Himmel & Wilson firm has completed nearly 300 planning and evaluation projects for public libraries, regional consortia, and state library agencies in thirty-five states. Included among these projects are six statewide evaluations of the implementation of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) program completed during the last round of five-year evaluations in 2001 and 2002—for Indiana, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, Ohio, and Oregon. Swanson worked on North Carolina's LSTA evaluation during the same time period.

Himmel & Wilson does a great deal of work with state library administrative agencies. In addition to the COSLINE contract, Himmel & Wilson was awarded contracts in 2006 by the New York State Education Department to evaluate the New York Online Virtual Electronic Library (NOVEL) database program as a part of their five-year LSTA evaluation, from the Delaware Division of Libraries and the District of Columbia Public Library to conduct their LSTA evaluations and to help with the development of their next five-year plans, and from the Oregon State Library to conduct their five-year LSTA evaluation.

Ms Laughlin has recently worked with the State Library of Iowa, the Kentucky Department of Library and Archives, and the Mississippi Library Commission. Ms Swanson has worked with state library agencies in Georgia, North Carolina, and Wisconsin.

Evaluation Costs

The following documents the total costs involved in the contract with Himmel & Wilson for conducting the LSTA evaluations for the six states that participated in the COSLINE shared evaluation effort. The six states shared equally in the evaluation costs. Therefore, Maine's portion of the total evaluation budget was \$ 23,900. In addition to these costs, it is estimated that Maine State Library staff devoted approximately 104 hours to the evaluation representing an investment of somewhere in the neighborhood of \$4,884 in Maine's evaluation effort. This includes approximately two weeks of the Deputy State Librarian's time, which includes collaborating with other states to develop and disseminate the Request for Proposal for the six-state effort, and time expended evaluating responses to the RFP.

Also included in the estimate of time spent is approximately four hours of time by MSL consultants and/or their staff, Director of Information Services, and Director of Outreach Services.

Table 12 shows the total contract costs for COSLINE’s six-state LSTA evaluation effort. The table breaks the costs down into the phases described earlier in this section.

Table 12: Evaluation Costs for All Six States	
<i>Phase</i>	<i>Total</i>
I: Discovery	\$14,600
II: Data/Information Gathering	\$79,200
III: Data/Information Analysis	\$15,400
IV: Synthesis	\$7,200
V: Reporting	\$27,000
TOTAL	\$143,400