

Minnesota Department of Education
State Library Services Division

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Evaluation of LSTA Grants Federal Fiscal Years 2008 to 2011

Library Services and Technology Act
Institute of Museum and Library Services

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Prepared by State Library Services Division
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Management Analysis & Development
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Introduction

Background and needs

The federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant program supports Minnesota libraries in their efforts to deliver critical services to a population with diverse library needs. It is an essential program for every library in Minnesota. State, city and county support continues to provide resources for libraries. However, funding reductions have had serious impacts on library services and programs.

Libraries continue to meet the needs of a growing population of seniors, an increasing population of individuals with limited English proficiency, growing minority populations, and children and adults lacking direct access to library services due to geographical or socio-economic barriers.

Children from birth to 17 years of age living in poverty continue to have a high priority within the library community. Early literacy and learning skills and ongoing reading and technology skills affect more children in Minnesota than just those living in poverty. Access to adequate technology, electronic information resources, efficient interlibrary loan, resource sharing, and delivery programs, and training to use vital resources continue to be necessary resources for libraries throughout the state.

Minnesota's demographics are crucial to understanding current needs and preparation for the future. The Twin Cities metropolitan area is anticipated to increase by almost 40 percent in the next ten years. The population is growing in diversity. Rural Minnesota continues to lose population and the state covers a large geographical area, making access to strong library services more costly. Technology changes at a rapid pace that requires sufficient resources. These and other factors have contributed to significant pressures on libraries.

LSTA requirements and priorities

The LSTA program plan calls for rigorous planning and execution of projects. State plans prioritize end-user needs, provide for rigorous needs assessment and evaluation based on measurable outputs and outcomes, and suitable documentation of results. The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) requires the use of measurable outcomes or "impacts" of its spending on federal grants. This requires that libraries measure changes or gains in end-users' skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, life condition or status that can be attributed to programs funded through the LSTA grants program.

The current Minnesota State 5-Year LSTA Plan outlines two broad priorities for funding: (1) programs that make library resources more accessible to urban and rural localities, special needs populations and to others who have difficulty using library services due to but not limited to geographical, socio-economic and infrastructure barriers; and, (2) activities using technology, electronic information gathering and dissemination of information and information sharing among libraries and between libraries and other communities to meet the ever increasing knowledge based needs of the library end-user.

Additional IMLS guidance for the evaluation

The IMLS stated that research questions should be directed to:

- highlight effective past practices
- identify processes at work in implementing the activities in the plan, including the use of performance-based measurements in planning, policy making and administration

- develop findings and recommendations from evaluating the past five years for inclusion in the next five-year planning cycle

Minnesota State Plan 2008-2012 areas of significant need

The State Plan focused on three areas of significant need:

1. Meeting the informational, educational and recreational needs of special needs populations, children 0-17 and underserved populations restricted from direct library service due to geographic or socio-economic barriers.
 - a. Special needs populations
 - b. Barriers restricting underserved populations from direct library service.
 - c. Children (ages 0-17)
2. Provide strong technology infrastructure and electronic services that build the ability of Minnesota's libraries to provide the best services for all Minnesota residents.
3. Provide statewide initiatives, services and training components that build the ability of Minnesota's libraries to provide the best services for all Minnesota residents.

Evaluators and commissioning organization

The evaluation was conducted by the Management Analysis & Development Division of Minnesota Management & Budget, a department of Minnesota government. The evaluators were Mark Scipioni and Kirby Pitman. Information about Management Analysis and the evaluators can be found at www.mad.state.mn.us.

The evaluation was commissioned by the State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA), Nancy Walton, Director and State Librarian, and James Wroblewski, LSTA Coordinator.

Evaluation summary

Major questions addressed in the evaluation, and major findings

The evaluation framework was based on the following five questions. The questions and a summary of the answers from this evaluation are presented below.

1. To what extent have grantees defined outcomes tied to goals and a methodology for a successful project with documented achievement of the outcomes?

There is considerable variation in the extent to which competitive grant projects were planned and implemented in a manner that allowed documentation of end-user outcomes (of the type that the Institute of Museum and Library Services directed). Several projects encountered a variety of problems that basically precluded arriving at sufficient documentation of end-user outcomes. There were also several examples of projects that accomplished exemplary results, demonstrating planning, execution, and documentation that based on our evaluation, met requirements set by the IMLS. Overall, we evaluated about 20 percent of the projects as “good.” These projects had well-defined outcomes, a good implementation and evaluation plan, and good execution of the plan with solid results. About 40 percent of the projects were rated as “medium” – meaning in our interpretation, that they had some well-developed elements but were weak on other major components. Many of these “medium” projects had sufficiently defined outcomes but lacked in measurement. This “medium” category also included 2011 projects that were well scoped but, because they only had mid-year reports available, had not yet produced results. Finally, almost 40 percent of projects were deemed “inadequate” because they had no outcomes defined and no measurement of results, although they generally had outputs (counts). Some projects in this category, in reports or interviews, noted exigencies of implementation that they felt kept the project from successful completion. Losses of staff or staffing changes are examples.

2. What key factors facilitated or inhibited achieving project results?

A main barrier to achieving results was not having well-defined, reasonable outcomes to measure. Another significant barrier was not having well-developed measurement instruments, typically end-user surveys, that would link to outcomes. If outcomes are not well-defined and targeted, they are difficult or impossible to measure. If surveys do not directly tie back to well-specified outcomes, then measurement can’t succeed in identifying results. Third, deficient local grant project management practices sometimes had important negative impacts on success potential.

3. What are best (IMLS recommended) practices that were evidenced by the best projects? How did projects measure up in terms of using the best practices?

Best practices were generally easy to identify in the best projects. Based on the results directed model, or logic model, with clear and practical outcome goals, and well-executed to capture information directly related to the intended outcomes, these projects are examples that should be communicated. It is not clear, however, that the lessons from the best projects always provide transferable lessons in outcome definition, processes, and documentation.

4. What results have been achieved cumulatively in relation to the IMLS priorities and the State Plan goals?

The results achieved cumulatively by these projects are significant and clearly support the objectives of the IMLS defined goals as translated and implemented in the Minnesota State Plan 2008-2012. We concluded that the strongest results data was apparent in the State Plan Goal 1B (LSTA priorities 5 and 6). For the rest, in order of decreasing demonstration of results that support the goals: 1A, 2A, and 1C. All of the State Goal areas did provide evidence of results, but this

relative ranking may assist future decision making. Results and contributions to the achievement of goals are discussed in the Evaluation section for each project and below in a summary.

5. What lessons were learned, and what steps can be taken, in the preparation and planning for the next round of LSTA grants?

Some significant lessons were learned in the evaluation that would inform future grant award decisions, IMLS and State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA) support needs, and grantee actions. First, all involved must ensure that each project has reasonable, clearly-defined outcomes based on direct ties to identified needs. The end-user must be clearly identified and the mechanism to obtain documentation of measurable outcomes should be predefined to the extent practical. Without these components in place, the evaluation cannot find results as the IMLS defines them. Grantees should ensure that disruptions do not implode the project. Projects themselves were affected by staff changes, and some grantees could not provide information needed for the evaluation because someone left. Grantees should be careful about promising follow-up surveys long after the project is completed; that strategy did not work out in these projects.

Methods used in the evaluation

The evaluators used a combination of interviews, phone and email communications, documentation reviews, and online research to acquire information needed for this evaluation. The LSTA Coordinator and State Librarian were interviewed to formulate and conclude scope and approach, as well as for access to available administrative information. Check-ins on progress and issue clarification also occurred. An IMLS State Programs staff member with primary responsibility for LSTA evaluation process and oversight was interviewed. Each grantee was contacted, generally by phone, email, or a combination of both. Some grantees were sent email messages only. The purpose of most communications was to address and remedy issues, if any, related to the project documentation. Grantees were asked for information that would remedy gaps if the information were available. Some were asked to interpret documentation. In a number of instances, documentation that was referenced as “attached” was not available to the evaluators, either in the administrative files or later after conversations with grantees. Often this was surveys and survey data. In many cases, only summary results of surveys were available for review.

Results summary

Many of these projects used outcome based methods and measurement to show credible results and benefits. Many more projects made the attempt but could have had more solid documentation of benefits in support of IMLS and State Plan goals with better use of these tools. Among the lessons from the evaluation is that there may well be many significant, genuine benefits and outcomes that support IMLS and State Plan goals, but finding evidence of the results can be difficult. This can be due to project planning – particularly in the specification of outcomes and use of tools (surveys, for example) and measures – and/or due to project execution – including generating and maintaining documentation. Some of the projects were exemplary in the use of recommended tools and processes. However, in the case of other projects, determining what to conclude about their accomplishments from available evidence is a real puzzle and a challenge. Poor results data can mask a project with good results or show a project with a low level of benefits. This makes even basic evaluation difficult.

1. Target Programming to Underserved Populations (LSTA 5, 6, State Plan 1A) – Competitive grants

This program area derived its results from six projects. Each of the underserved groups identified in the Plan was targeted with at least one project. A seniors “Brain Fitness” project benefited at least 98% of the 331 seniors who participated, with survey results showing that the training “increased my knowledge” in all five topical areas. The number of participants, direct tie from training to perceived benefits, and consistency of the high marks, makes this project stand out. Another project involving technology training for seniors was directed to reducing barriers to library services. Post-event surveys

found that of 272 seniors surveyed, approximately 90% stated the training met their expectations and they would recommend it to others. Although these are not strong and specific outcome statements, the positive results indicate satisfaction with this learning. Projects that engaged new immigrants included computer classes (81% of attendees surveyed noted they learned something new) and youth were provided a common cultural experience (youth circle) that received 100% approval on several measures of learning group skills. Another project partnered libraries with 113 community organizations that received DVDs with information about targeted populations in relation to library services. Of 74 library staff surveyed, 42% said they were familiar with the DVDs. Unfortunately, on other measures of use and satisfaction, survey data was inadequate. Approximately two-thirds or more of surveyed community organizations found the six DVD topics “helpful” or “very helpful.” Overall, projects covered the planned targeted populations and showed high user satisfaction based on what was asked in surveys. However, survey design, outcomes specifications, and measurement were not strong.

2. Target Barrier Free Programming for Individuals (LSTA 5, 6. State Plan 1B) – *Competitive grants*

This program area derived its results from eight projects. There were several strong projects that dealt well with outcome based evaluation. The projects in this goal area seemed to best achieve LSTA and state plan goals, among the plan areas. The strongest project from an outcomes based evaluation framework is a 2011 workforce enhancement (collaboration for jobs) project with only a half-year report available for review. Very good design for ongoing review and evaluation were indicated by the use of intake surveys, workshop evaluations, attendance counts, documented adjustments made to plans based on counts and other interim findings, and a final survey of those who participated. Project goals were very well specified and the half-year results easily exceeded the seemingly aggressive goals for accomplishment in developing computer skills and use of online tools for job search. This appears to be a model project. Another exceptional project provided a range of training and services to assist ex-offenders and their families, including four programs to deal with various aspects of their needs. All were tied to making use of library resources. Good use of pre- and post- surveys (although with somewhat weak results-based formulations of questions in many cases), found strong satisfaction with new knowledge, with the experiences, and with plans for behavioral changes involving use of library resources. A third project with good survey-based outcome data, though limited in numbers, was a project to pilot test library kiosks in two large metropolitan counties. The kiosks had a large volume of use. The surveys were well designed to discover what was satisfying to users and to help shape future plans for library services. A two-part project with grants in 2008 and 2011 engaged immigrants (and seniors) to learn to use a variety of new and familiar technologies in workshops held in the system library branches. Attendance for the 2008 project was 1,060 people in 107 workshops. The pre- and post- surveys asked generally whether training for each type of technology was helpful, and the responses were consistently high among the 101 respondents. Two other projects essentially did not attempt to evaluate outcomes, explaining why the change could not be measured or that there was nothing to measure. The two projects are notable for making no attempt at evaluation.

3. Target Programming to Children (0-17) (LSTA 5, 6. State Plan 1C) – *Competitive grants*

This program area derived its results from eight projects. A stronger project for outcome based evaluation was one inviting teens to branch libraries through events that engaged them with technology equipment, software and board games. The grant also funded a workshop for librarians to manage the services. Twenty-seven events were attended by 310 teens. The outcome goals were to have at least 25% of teens indicate they would be more likely to visit the library than before the event (71% said they would). Another goal was to have 50% of library staff indicate they felt more knowledgeable and comfortable in dealing with teens. In a pre-survey, 57% said they were comfortable, which indicates that the original goal was low. The first staff surveys showed that they started from a better position than expected; and the post- workshop survey found that 79% felt comfortable working with teens; and the post-grant period survey found additional improvement to 93 percent. On this outcome measure, the results were significant. Unfortunately, the other projects had a variety of process deficiencies that largely precluded direct measurement of useful outcomes. They

included poor workshop attendance and response to surveys, low participation in an evaluation tool, insufficient connection between the activities being evaluated and defined outcomes, and poorly defined project outcomes which made meaningful measurement very difficult.

4. Technology and infrastructure (LSTA 1, 2, 3, 4. State Plan 2A) – *Competitive grants*

This program area derived its results from twelve projects. They included providing access to legal resources online, introducing audiobooks, upgrading capabilities of school media centers, migrating collections online for better access, expanding video as a means to deliver information and services, updating Websites, implementing open source ILS software, and training for use of laptops. This wide variety of value-adding technologies for libraries has little outcome based evaluation. A better example among this group of projects involved one to expand access to and knowledge of online legal resources. Pre- and post- events surveys were administered and respondents reported improved knowledge and preparation to deal with their legal issues. The questions could have been better framed to show parallel before and after self-assessment, but the responses give the impression of improvements, as noted by 120 participants. This is likely a case where better questions would have gotten equally or more positive responses. Improved outcome definitions and survey design/planning would have helped most of the other projects.

5. Statewide initiatives and services that build the capacity of libraries and their staff to serve their communities (LSTA 1, 2, 3, 4. State Plan 2B) – *Statewide grants*

The projects for the Braille and Talking Book Library and for Minitex (1) interlibrary loan and delivery, and (2) reference outreach and training cover all of the evaluation years. These projects are statewide initiatives funded to maintain and improve critical library services infrastructure (capacity building). The data that supports their funding is principally statistical data, which is reproduced for essential selected measures in this report. The results and outcomes from these ongoing services are also shown – and highlighted – in anecdotal information that each of the grantee organizations collects from end-users and libraries/library systems that utilize their services. Because of the importance of this anecdotal information to understanding of end-user benefits, the evaluators collected, from the organizations, anecdotes that both highlight significant benefits by example show the range of benefits (or a reasonable selection) that the organizations' LSTA funded activities produce. The inclusion of end-user anecdotes in an assessment of outcomes and benefits from LSTA grants is useful, but the evidence is subjective, situational, and difficult to measure and quantify.

Recommendations

1. Improve outcome-based evaluation skills

We found many applications lacked well defined outcomes or failed to include any outcomes. Some outcomes were defined so broadly that they were impossible to measure and thus it would not be practical to attribute benefits to the grant project. Some outcomes were reasonably defined but the measurement instruments were not tied to the outcomes. Based on these findings, we conclude many grantees lack the current understanding and/or skills to develop sound outcomes and measurements. Therefore, we recommend the following: (1) Institute of Museum and Library Services and the State Library Services should focus more time and resources on training in order to ensure clear and robust outcomes and results. Training has occurred, but future training should be directed to the needs of specific projects. Training should be required for all applicants, so they have the skills to develop reasonable outcomes and tie those outcomes to measurement strategies in their specific proposals/applications. (2) A variety of training options should be explored. One possibility is to require that applicants complete the Shaping Outcomes Course online (www.shapingoutcomes.org) and explore the possibility of offering it as a webinar so participants are more engaged and committed than merely reading through the module on their own. (3) The state's library community should consider additional ways to assist libraries that want to apply for LSTA (and perhaps other) grants that require an outcome-based approach to evaluation. The libraries and library systems that have developed greater

expertise might provide a type of mutual assistance so that more libraries can develop strong applications – including goal-directed specific outcomes and measurement tools for their projects.

2. Strengthen evaluation plans through the application process

We learned that, in some cases, applications were accepted that were deficient in proposed definitions of outcomes and evaluation methodology. If grants are awarded without a sufficient outcomes-based plan, there is small chance that a post-project evaluation would identify successful outcomes. Therefore, we recommend the following: (1) The application process should be redesigned to emphasize evaluation. Both the Letter of Intent and Application forms should be strengthened to include a full detailed evaluation section emphasizing evaluation requirements. The application form should include specific language about evaluation expectations. The evaluation section should be moved to the front of the document to emphasize the importance of framing the evaluation at the beginning of the project. The grant letter of intent and the application would need to clearly show how the project results will be documented for the purposes of evaluation. (2) The final payment to the grantee should be made only when a complete evaluation has been conducted, as stated in each grantee's application, and all relevant documentation for evaluation (e.g., surveys, raw data) has been submitted and deemed acceptable by LSTA Coordinator. We consider this additional front-end planning and assurance to be a best practice.

3. Improve communication of evaluation plans and results, especially for the exemplary projects

We concluded that the methods for communication to the library community of key findings and lessons learned from evaluations were not enough to broaden established patterns of best practices for LSTA grant applications. Many projects were good models and their methodology and findings should be available and explained as exemplary so that other organizations can learn from their experiences. We recommend that there be a plan for easy online access to project information (including evaluation plans, key findings, and lessons learned). We also recommend that the lessons and examples of best practices be incorporated into training. Also, as noted above, some potential grantees will need more than lessons learned; they will need specific additional help on their proposed projects.

We also found that many projects had the same or very close to the same basic design and fell into similar program categories (e.g., computer trainings, development of online legal forms, programs for teens). Many outcome definitions and measurement instruments for these types of projects were similar, but some were not as well done as the best ones. Additionally, some applications stood out as exemplary. We conclude that there is wide variation in applicants' skills in and/or attention to the development of the outcome-based evaluation process within program areas that have very similar projects. Staff availability may also be an issue. Therefore, we recommend developing examples of outcomes and measurement instruments by common program types to be made available to applicants and assist them in their evaluation plan development. These might be considered to be "templates" for various types of similar projects. Such templates and examples may assist applicants by providing them with ideas for useful outcomes and measurements as well as promoting by example the standard of quality expected by State Library Services and IMLS. In addition, this information, from past projects or future projects, should provide the basis for development of benchmarks for the future State Plans. We consider the development and use of useful templates (including some from past exemplary projects) and related reinforcement of IMLS requirements to be a best practice.

4. Improve overall quality of the data and documentation

We found several cases in which original survey data collected or the survey instruments were no longer available for review. This occurred even when the final report noted the information was attached. This is a noteworthy limit on the evaluator's ability to verify and further analyze relevant information and results. We recommend that further efforts be made to communicate to the grantees the requirement that they send in with the final report and/or retain all important project information until the five-year evaluation is completed. The retention requirements should be well specified.

Evaluation

Evaluation questions or issues addressed

1. To what extent have grantees defined outcomes tied to goals and a methodology for a successful project with documented achievement of the outcomes?
2. What are best (IMLS recommended) practices that were evidenced by the best projects? How did all projects measure up in terms of using the best practices?
3. What key factors facilitated or inhibited achieving project results?
4. What results have been achieved cumulatively in relation to IMLS priorities and the State Plan goals?
5. What lessons were learned, and what steps can be taken, in the preparation and planning for the next round of LSTA grants?

Values and principles guiding the evaluation process

The evaluators were guided by the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for Evaluators. (1) Conduct a systematic inquiry. We attempted to obtain all available information and data that pertains to particular projects from the State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA) and grantees. We contacted all of the grantees and conducted in-person, phone, and email interviews and other communications as we determined to be needed. We discussed shortcomings of the available data and contacts' knowledge with the SLAA as the evaluation progressed. (2) Competence. The Management Analysis & Development Division has experience with evaluations and other credentials that we believe are at least sufficient for this evaluation. The two evaluators have educational qualifications and experience with program and project evaluations in a number of contexts. See www.mad.state.mn.us. We have past limited experience working with Minnesota libraries that gives us helpful background but does not compromise neutrality. (3) Integrity/honesty. We have no relationships that would present a real or apparent conflict of interest. Our work values and performance capabilities are familiar to the SLAA. (4) Respect for people. We conducted the information gathering in a respectful manner and to our knowledge did not compromise any privacy or other rights of participants. We were open in our communications about the purpose and strategies of our work. (5) Responsibilities for general and public welfare. We are purposeful in considering the needs of the IMLS and the SLAA and all contacted stakeholders, as well as the public interest in effective use of public funds and the responsibilities of libraries to their communities and to society. Our actions were directed to evaluate competently and develop useful and actionable recommendations.

Methodology

The LSTA Coordinator and the State Librarian were interviewed to formulate and conclude scope and approach, as well as for access to available administrative information. Check-ins on progress and issue clarification also occurred. An IMLS State Programs staff member with primary responsibility for LSTA evaluation process and oversight was interviewed. Within the framework of the evaluation questions, the evaluators used a combination of interviews, phone and email communications, documentation reviews, and online research to acquire needed information about all of the grant projects. Each grantee organization was contacted, generally by phone or a combination of phone and email. Some grantees were sent email messages only if the additional needed information was judged to be minimal. The purpose of most communications was to address and remedy issues, if any, related to the project documentation. Grantees were asked for information that would remedy gaps if the information was available. Some were asked to interpret documentation. In a number of instances, documentation that was referenced as "attached" was not available to the evaluators, either in the administrative files or later after conversations with grantees. Often this information was surveys and survey data. In some cases, only summary results of surveys were available for review, because documentation was currently inaccessible. In general, the earlier projects were less likely to yield more complete information.

The methodology was designed to obtain relevant information that would address the essential evaluation questions. The availability, completeness, and quality of the information to address the issues were primary limitations in the analysis. We became aware that many libraries are not well equipped to set up and follow through with the documentation of project end-user results. These are generally small projects in small libraries. Another aspect of information availability problems was staff turnover. In a several year timeframe, individuals who were primarily responsible for projects may have moved on, so the memory and perhaps the documentation were not readily accessible. With only one or two exceptions, the use of additional quantitative evaluation (other than to reformulate data to be more concise or easy to interpret) was unnecessary to show results. In the cases where a large amount of data was produced, the grantees had done quantitative analysis sufficient for present purposes in this review. We did not discover any reason to question the validity of documented data in the projects. There was no opportunity to review or test reliability, and so we could not make any judgments about the reliability of the data.

Limitations of the evaluation analysis

FY2011 grants had only half-year reports available. Other scope issues included: (1) the evaluation did not consider questions related to the process or criteria for selection/award of grants, and (2) some LSTA grants were not in scope.¹ We observe that the current evaluation framework has a depth and intended rigor that seems to have been beyond what many participants expected or could reasonably accomplish when they applied for LSTA funding. Although OBE is becoming more pervasive and useful, its adoption is far from complete. It seems to us that some grantees have not been up to the level of effort needed to fit this framework for their projects. That observation is no reflection on the merits of the projects, or of the evaluation rigor; it is only to observe that some participants have a distance to go before they can fit this model. These projects were hard to judge for merit (results) when the evaluation data was not available, but we understand that some projects could have had substantial end-user benefits that simply did not show up in documentation.

Major limitations of the analysis follow from unavailability of relevant information. One set of concerns is for the data that would be necessary but was never created for lack of appreciation for how important it would be. Other concerns are for documentation that was created and should be available but for various reasons was not. Some items specifically mentioned in final reports as attachments, for example, were never found. In other cases, raw data from surveys, statistical and narrative, were gone and only somewhat unclear summaries remain.

Intended users and uses

Consistent with the uses of the State Plan and other SLAA and IMLS expectations, the evaluation results can be used by past and future grantees and those who oversee programs and projects. Library organizations and library support organizations would also find useful the evaluations of past projects and recommendations of the future of this important program.

State Library Administrative Agency actions and challenges during the evaluation period

Plan modifications. The Minnesota LSTA 5-Year Plan was modified to remove program activities that concerned continuing education and Voluntary Certification programs. Guidelines and rules did not allow direct use of LSTA funds to assist in training library staff unless the training was directed to a specific goal and activity that served the end-user. These plan changes were required by IMLS legislation and guidelines.

Use of performance metrics. Results from past evaluations were part of the decision making process that resulted in opening the competitive grants program to academic, school, and special libraries as well as public libraries. Prior to the current plan, libraries needed regional approval. Having more applicants allows consideration of a greater range of outcome-based projects in each of the goal areas. Another policy change based on past performance metrics and library community feedback was to expand the definition of end-users for purposes of providing barrier-free access to library services. Again, this may allow for more project proposals and potentially additional outcomes.

Challenges to use of OBE. Major challenges to using outcome-based data to guide policy and managerial decisions during the evaluation period have included: (1) *Gaining commitment* – The major issue has been getting library community commitment to OBE. While acceptance has improved, it is far from full adoption. (2) *Obtaining data suitable for evaluation* – Another major issue has been acquiring strong, complete outcomes-based data. Improvements have occurred, but there are still many barriers. The SLAA has expanded training and several Minnesota state programs now focus on learning and adopting OBE requirements and providing good outcomes data.

Project evaluation

The projects in State Plan Goal Areas 1A, 1B, 1C, and 2A are competitive grants. The projects in Goal Area 2B are statewide grants. In the narratives below, we designated the best-evaluated projects with a diamond ♦ and other high rated projects with a ● filled circle. The marks are adjacent to project names. Notes are collected at the end of the report (Endnotes).

1A Project results (The statement of needs, LSTA Purposes and State Plan goals are in Endnotes.²)

1. Brain Fitness – 2010 ♦ Seniors

Metropolitan Library Services Agency (MELSA)

Project: The Metropolitan Library Service Agency (MELSA) partnered with the Alzheimer’s Association. The purpose of the project was to encourage seniors to develop a brain healthy lifestyle through educational workshops and participation in “Brain Fitness” activity stations at 25 percent of the MELSA libraries. MELSA defined five outcomes and measured them with participant surveys. The Brain Fitness project provided seniors with skills and knowledge to improve their quality of life.

Reported outcomes and results: Participants of the 50 workshops were asked to complete a survey and 331 seniors responded. Survey results summarized below indicate the success of the project in meeting its defined outcomes. The survey questions and percent of respondents who “agreed” or “strongly agreed”:

1. The workshop increased my knowledge of a healthy brain in relation to overall health and normal aging. (99%)
2. The workshop increased my knowledge of the benefits of increasing mental activity. (99%)
3. The workshop increased knowledge of the important items in a brain healthy diet. (98%)
4. The workshop increased knowledge of the effect of physical activity on brain function. (99%)
5. The workshop increased knowledge of benefit of social activities in supporting brain health. (99%)

Evaluation findings: MELSA developed well-defined outcomes and used a survey with targeted questions clearly linked to the outcomes. The participants’ strong positive responses to the questions demonstrate their perception of having received the intended benefits.

2. My Life My Library – 2008 New immigrants Saint Paul Public Library

Project: *My Life My Library* aimed to increase awareness about library services among non-native English speakers by creating six video segments in English, Hmong and Somali. The Saint Paul Public Library partnered with a local cable access channel, Saint Paul Neighborhood Network (SPNN), to broadcast the videos as well as post them on the library website. The videos were also distributed to 113 community organizations working with the targeted populations. The video segments included Welcome to the Library, Job Resources, Services for Children and Teens, Services for Older Adults, Technology Resources, and Cultural Programs.

Reported outcomes and results: The outcomes for the project were measured through a staff survey, a community agency survey and statistics on the number of views of the videos on the website. Twelve

percent of the 113 organizations responded to the community agency survey and 74 SPPL staff responded to the staff survey. Not all the defined outcomes were addressed in the measurement.

Staff survey

1. Librarians will use the DVDs with customers
 - 42% of the 74 surveyed library staff indicated they were familiar with the DVDs
 - One librarian indicated using the DVD(s) with customer(s)
2. The DVD will be helpful to the partner agencies: Not measured
3. Partner agency clients will be more willing to go to the library: Not measured
4. The DVDs will be useful for librarians and customers: Not measured
5. Partner agencies will increase their referrals to the library: Not measured

Community survey

The majority of agencies found all the video segments “very helpful.” The percentage of community organizations that found individual video segments “very helpful”:

▪ Welcome to the library	73%	▪ Services for older adults	73%
▪ Cultural programs	82%	▪ Technology resources	64%
▪ Services for children and teens	73%	▪ Job resources	73%

Usage statistics by language

From August 2009 to February 2012:

- English language videos – 1,249 views
- Hmong language videos – 781 views
- Somali language videos – 1,465 views

Evaluation findings: Not all of the outcomes for this project were directly measured. In addition, they proposed to have the community agencies who received the DVDs complete an online survey. The agencies were surveyed, however, only 13 of the 113 agencies responded. One reason for this might have been that the agencies were not given much time between receiving the DVDs and being asked to complete the survey. This same reason may have been why, in the results of the librarian survey, only one librarian indicated using the DVD. The librarians may not have had enough time to use the DVDs after receiving them and before being surveyed. Usage statistics for the videos shows significant use by the target audiences, and may indicate that the information is found to be useful (although only by inference from the large number of uses).

3. At the Crossroads- Public Libraries and Web-based Legal Forms – 2009 **Seniors and Latinos** **Ramsey County Law Library**

Project: At the Crossroads was a project aimed at promoting access to legal forms in public libraries. The target population was seniors and Latinos. The project provided legal forms online focused on financial and health care planning.

Reported outcomes and results: Librarians received training on the legal forms and were given pre- and post-tests. Of two defined outcomes listed below, one was measured with survey data.

1. Increase online legal form usage among seniors and Latinos in St. Paul and Ramsey County
 - Six new legal forms were created in English and Spanish
 - Circulation statistics were not tracked
2. Improve competencies and comfort levels of public librarians when dealing with legal resources.
 - Sixty-five librarians attended training. Pre-tests and post- tests were conducted:
 - Knowledge of general self-help resources: scores improved by 34%
 - Knowledge for dealing with unauthorized practice of law: scores improved by 22%

Evaluation findings: An attempt was made to measure the two defined outcomes for this project, although not to the extent proposed in the application. The pre- and post-test questions were directly linked to the outcome statements about librarian competencies and comfort levels and provided useful outcome

data. However, no circulation statistics were provided to assess the use of the website forms. In addition, community groups who were sent the brochure were not surveyed, as proposed in the application.

4. New Immigrant Connection – 2010 **New immigrants/non-native English speakers** **Hennepin County Library**

Project: The goal of *New Immigrant Connections* was to help ensure that members of the immigrant community understand and are able to use county library resources available to them. Three immigrant communities were targeted: Southeast Asian, East African, and Latino. The grant was used to underwrite and expand resources and programs for immigrant families in the county's highest poverty neighborhoods. Hennepin County Library held focus groups within each community to identify service priorities. Grant funds supported several programs within each immigrant community.

Reported outcomes and results: Participants in two program of the project were surveyed: East African Computer Class and the Hmong Youth Boys Circle.

1. Adult Computer Class- Teach participants something new.
Of the 10 adults who completed the evaluation:
 - 81% of participants at the Adult Computer Class indicated they had learned something new in the class
 - 19% indicated the class had reinforced prior skills
2. Hmong Youth Boys Circle
Surveys were given to participants. Of the 5 youth who completed the survey, 100% reported:
 - They had good conversations with people
 - They felt respected in the group
 - They learned how to avoid unnecessary conflicts
 - They learned how to get along with people

Evaluation findings: Although the project was initiated with a structured plan for evaluating outcomes for each component, the library did not follow through. They had unexpected staff changes and most planned outcome measurement did not take place. Overall participation was not clearly documented and survey participation was very small. Only two of the project programs were surveyed and the questions were not well related to the project purposes.

5. Audiovisuals for Student Success – 2011 (mid-year information) **Students – underserved populations** (students who have been away from school, new immigrants, hearing disabled, print-disabled, nontraditional, and displaced workers) **Anoka Technical College**

The purpose of the project was to update the audiovisual collection at Anoka Technical College to better address the academic needs of underserved populations, including:

- students who have spent a long period of time outside of the educational environment
- students who are still acquiring proficiency in English
- hearing disabled students
- students with low reading comprehension or invisible disabilities

Anoka Technical College partnered with Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE) to provide English Language Learners (ELL) courses at the college.

Reported mid-year outcomes and results: The application stated that faculty, Metro North ABE instructors, and students would be surveyed to assess:

- satisfaction with the project
- approximate the number of students who were reached with new materials
- evidence of enhanced academic success of traditionally underserved students

At the mid-year report, circulation of the audiovisual materials has increased 13 percent from the previous year. The survey instrument, if it had been created, was not available. No surveys have been conducted.

Evaluation findings: This project was funded in 2011 and, therefore, is only half way into the grant period. Evaluation results at this point include circulation statistics only. Indicators of academic success to be used in the third evaluation topic, and the methods to obtain the data, would be of interest to ensure there would likely be good evaluation information.

6. Laptop Lab for Seniors – 2008 **Seniors** **Great River Regional Library**

Project: The Laptop Lab for Seniors provided seniors with computer instruction services aimed at enhancing their lives and reducing barriers to library services. The trainings included turning on the computer and accessing and utilizing the Internet through the library website. Outcomes were measured by surveying seniors at the beginning and end of each class. Survey data was used to monitor the effectiveness of the classes and to determine what future classes should be offered.

Reported outcomes and results:

Of the 272 seniors who completed surveys:

- 89% indicated the class met their expectations
- 92% would recommend the class to others

Evaluation findings: This project proposed to conduct pre and post surveys of participants to assess the effectiveness of the computer trainings. Pre-survey and resulting information were not provided. Post-survey questions were general and did not note the more specific areas of training usefulness from the plan.

1B Project results (The statement of needs, LSTA Purposes, and State Plan goals are in Endnotes.³)

7. Anoka County Collaboration for Jobs – 2011 (mid-year information) ♦ **Unemployed residents** **Anoka County Library**

Project: This is a pilot project for a job skills training program. The program will provide access to job skill training, career information, networking, a computer lab, and basic computer literacy. The goal is to help overcome barriers to access through formal instruction in basic computer literacy, computer based job searches, and computer based career exploration. The LSTA grant funded a computer lab.

Reported mid-year outcomes and results: The outcomes are measured with attendance records and several survey instruments:

Intake Surveys

Intake surveys are administered and the information is used to make any changes in the services provided, resources offered and advertising efforts. The intake surveys also asked permission to contact the participant in the future to complete a follow-up (final) survey. Information gathered from the intake forms is used to modify the programs.

- The initial intake data showed that the majority of participants were over 45 years old. Given this information, several changes were made to the program including changing the screen resolution on the laptops and conducting more research into the job market needs of middle aged job seekers.
- The intake survey data also revealed that 86% of the participants had internet access at home. This information prompted an increase in electronic resource instruction and online advertising efforts.

Workshop Evaluations

Anoka County Library partnered with (1) Metro North Adult Basic Education (ABE) to conduct basic computer skills classes and (2) Anoka County Workforce Center to conduct computer based career exploration and computer based job search training.

- Participants at the ABE trainings completed surveys at the beginning and end of each class. Results of the surveys showed an increase in comfort levels with all the skills taught in the classes (Windows and the Internet, Word 1, Word 2, and Excel 2010).

- The Workforce Center participants complete surveys at the end of each class. Information gathered from the Workforce Center survey led to several changes in the workshops including increasing the handouts, schedule changes, better developed referral services, updated curriculums and increase promotion of library services.

Attendance counts and adjustments

Attendance in classes is reviewed regularly and informs changes to the program. Based on attendance data, the Introduction to the Internet class was discontinued and an additional Excel class was added.

Final Survey

A final survey is administered at least one month after participants complete a workshop. The focus of this survey is on how the participants are using the skills taught in the workshops. Shown below are Final Survey results from February 2012 after participating in the workshops/services. From September 2011 through February 2012, 739 people have participated in the workshop.

1. To provide job skills to underemployed and unemployed Anoka County residents to increase their competitiveness in the job market.
 - (a) Provide 75% of students of the basic computer classes with sufficient computer literacy to function in a technological world of unemployment applications, job applications, and resumes:
 - 83% improved their computer skills;
 - 100% improved their job search skills;
 - 100% indicated workshops introduced them to new job search resources/services;
 - 83% indicated workshops introduced them to new library resources and services;
 - 92% indicated workshops/services impacted their job search experience;
 - 33% gained or changed employment since participating in the workshop/ services.
 - (b) 70% of the participants will have used online library tools to search or apply for a job by the conclusion of the project:
 - 100% have searched for and 83% have applied for jobs online;
 - 100% continue to use skills gained through the workshops/services.
2. To test the feasibility and demand for remote access to Anoka County's job skills training;
 - Results not yet available
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of a suburban branch library in complementing the services of a centrally located Workforce Center.
 - Results not yet available

Evaluation findings: This 2011 project, although having only mid-point information available for evaluation, provides an exceptional example of the application of outcome-based evaluation. The outcomes are well-defined and data is methodically collected through several appropriate surveys and attendance records. Interim data is being used to assess the effectiveness of the program and make changes as needed. Finally, the results obtained to date clearly exceed the goals set. All surveys and raw data through February 2012 were provided for this evaluation.

8. Re-Entry Resources for Ex-Offenders and Their Families – 2010 ♦ **Ex-Offenders and Their Families** **Hennepin County Library**

Project: Hennepin County Library partnered with Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facilities to enhance and expand library services to residents in three county correctional facilities. The central goal of the project was to improve the quality of life of the underserved and unrecognized children and families of incarcerated individuals. There were four programs provided: *Read to Me*, *Book Talks*, *Freedom Ticket*, and *One Read*.

- The *Freedom Ticket* program assists offenders during incarceration and after release, with jobs and small business training, technology, health, personal finance and parenting programs and resources. LSTA funds were used to expand the program to more residents.

- In the *Read to Me* program, librarian facilitators helped inmates to select age-appropriate books and record themselves reading to their child. The recording is given to the child. Inmates are encouraged to read to their children at visitations.
- In *One Read*, a program started at the woman's facility, groups of woman read the same book and met to discuss it. With LSTA funds, this program was expanded to the men's facility.
- Hennepin County Home School *Book Talks* are facilitated by library outreach staff who visit the juvenile facility twice a month and engage youth in book talk discussions and introduce them to library resources. The LSTA funds supported the outreach staff to spend more time at the facility and strengthen their relationships with the youth.
- In addition, facilities residents received "Going Home" re-entry documents, the Freedom Ticket newsletter, and/or the re-entry DVD, all funded by LSTA.

Reported outcomes and results: Programs in four grant-funded areas had a total of 2,365 attendees. Surveys were given following, or pre-and post-, for these project interactions.

Freedom Ticket goals:

Understand how to use library resources to seek employment and/or start a small business

- 97% of those surveyed indicated after they leave ACF they will use the library for help when looking for a job.

Understand the role public libraries can play in employment and small business information

- 47% in pre-survey, and 98% in post ACF-survey, answered affirmatively to question: Did you use the library for help with employment?

Be able to successfully complete employment applications and / or small business plan: No data

Read to Me goals:

Understand importance of reading to their children

- 22% Increase in residents' surveyed who stated they will read to their children every day
- 50% increase in residents surveyed who stated "yes" I will take my children to the library

Understand how to choose books to read to their children

- 11% increase in residents who correctly answered the question "What are the best books for babies?"
- 12% increase in residents who correctly answered question "What are the best books for toddlers?"

Understand the role public library can play in early literacy development

- Survey questions about early literacy- 60% increase in number with knowledge of the subject.

One Read goals:

Participated in their first book club:

- Women- 79% Men-76%

Read a book they normally would not have read:

- Women- 49% Men- 64%

Shared their views about the book in the discussion:

- Women- 74% Men - data not provided

Book Talks (home school) goals:

Have participated in their first book talks

- 89% of the 36 surveyed had been to at least one, and in most cases more than one, Book Talk;
- 11% were at their first Book Talk

Read a book they normally would not have read

- Of 36 surveyed, 73% answered yes to the question

Evaluation findings: Hennepin County Library has developed a solid evaluation approach and continues to conduct thorough follow-through using targeted surveys for each part of the program. The data is well organized and collected on a regular basis. Information about the *Freedom Ticket* program was presented twice at the 2011 American Library Association conference with two more presentations scheduled for the 2012 conference.

9. Library Services for the Underserved via Kiosks (Express Libraries) – 2009

Residents (increased access to services) •

Carver County Library

Project: The purpose of the project was to test whether fully automated self-service library kiosks are a viable model for expanding service in growing suburban and ex-urban areas. The project was designed to address barriers to accessing the library caused by limited open hours and distance from a library building. The kiosks are a self-contained system that allows library customers access to limited library services through self-service. At the kiosks, customers can access the library catalog and electronic resources; place holds; pick-up, return and renew materials; manage library accounts; and receive direct library resources via email or phone. Initially single kiosks were sited in Carver and Washington Counties. Later, three additional kiosks were added, with only lockers and book drops.

Reported outcomes and results: Each county conducted a survey of users.

In *Washington County*:

- 48 customers completed survey. Nearly all found overall use of Express Library to be very easy.
- The most popular services were to pick up reserved library items (96%) and return items to the book drop (85%).
- 69% placed a hold using the Express Library computer and 67% used the computer to search the library catalogue or database.
- All but one respondent felt the directions to use the kiosk were clear and easy to follow and 100% indicated they would use the service again.

In *Carver County*:

- 86 surveys completed. All respondents indicated the express library was very easy or easy to use.
- 43% used the express libraries to return books, 42% to pick up reserved items, 8% to search the library catalog, and 7% to place a hold.

Total usage statistics for Calendar Year 2011:

- 4,687 lockers filled
- 9,193 library items checked out
- 15,122 books returned

Evaluation findings: This project used surveys and usage statistics to determine if the express library system was a good model to expand library services in terms of hours of service and geographic coverage. They used the initial data in the decision to expand the express library in a limited way to the additional sites. The survey questions assessed ease of use, services used, and future use of the express libraries. The data collection is on-going; the libraries continue to collect and use information. The methods and tools they use appear to be sufficient in linking their data with outcomes and goals.

10. Digital Immigrants I – 2008

Immigrants and Seniors

East Central Regional Library

Project: The goal of Digital Immigrants was to familiarize people, especially seniors, who did not grow up in the digital age with technological devices and concepts. Six hands-on workshops were conducted in each of the fourteen East Central Regional Library branches. Workshops provided training on use of the Internet, email, digital cameras, cell phones, scanners, MP3 players, television services, and telephone services. In addition, the project provided training for library staff – enabling them to be more proficient with technology resources. The project was developed using evaluation findings of the Southeast Library System (SELS) Senior Techies project (background information about this project was not provided).

Reported outcomes and results: The outcomes defined in the application included helping immigrants in developing knowledge, establishing their own comfort level, and acquiring basic skills in the technology tools presented.

- 107 workshops were offered
- 1,060 people attended.

Pre- and post- surveys were administered at each class session. The participants judged the individual workshops as “extremely helpful” (on a scale that included not helpful, somewhat helpful, and extremely helpful) in these percentages (number of survey responses in parenthesis):

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ Computer and basic Internet – 86% (101) | ▪ Cell phone – 85% (88) |
| ▪ Internet and email – 89% (123) | ▪ Scanner and MP3 player – 93% (92) |
| ▪ Camera – 77% (278) | ▪ Digital TV conversion – 67% (80) |

Evaluation findings: There was no link between the pre- and post- surveys in terms of knowledge gained, comfort level increased, and basic skills learned pre and post workshop. The pre-workshop surveys asked about comfort level with workshop topics; however, the post surveys do not include a matching question to measure the change, so there is no assessment of comfort level improvement. The same situation (not having data to compare pre- and post- results) occurs for skills learned and knowledge developed. Satisfaction levels surveyed indicated high “helpful” results across the board. The application proposed to do an 11-month follow-up survey to assess knowledge gained, but follow-up survey data was not provided.

11. Digital Immigrants II – 2011 (mid-year information)
Immigrants and Seniors
East Central Regional Library

Project: Digital Immigrants II expanded the 2008 LSTA funded Digital Immigrants I project. LSTA funds were used for additional workshops including social networking, electronic reading devices, career resources and job search online, and for computer upgrades. As a result of lessons learned from the 2008 workshops, and the waiting lists, class sizes were increased with Digital Immigrants II and an assistant was added to each class. Outcomes were defined in the application:

- Attendees will learn what social networking is and will begin to use those networks that are most useful to them, as well as how to safeguard themselves in social network environments. They will also be less fearful of social networking.
- Attendees will be comfortable with E-readers and use them to check out E-books.
- Attendees will learn new computer skills to find jobs or enhance their job skills.
- Attendees will learn how to keep their own computers updated.

Reported mid-year outcomes and results: Report did not provide address outcome measurement.

Evaluation findings: Pre- and post- workshop surveys workshops were proposed but no surveys or data were provided for the mid-year report. The contact was asked for any additional information, but none was available at this time.

12. Minnesota Gets Ready – Early Childhood Resources/Access for All – 2010
Early childcare providers
Debra S. Fish Childhood Resource Library, Resources for Child Caring

Project: LSTA funds were used to establish the Debra S. Fish Early Childhood Resource Library at the Resources for Child Caring (now called Think Small) as a partner branch of the Saint Paul Public Library (SPPL). The purpose was to improve the access of underserved early childcare providers to early childhood library resources. The SPPL Materials and Management Center cataloged the Debra S. Fish Library materials and implemented interlibrary loan to transfer materials between SPPL and the Library. A satellite library was established at organization’s Minneapolis office targeting the professional needs of patrons with limited English proficiency and minority patrons. A short-term Books by Mail program was established for customers outside the seven-county metro area to encourage use of materials while the interlibrary loan system was being created.

Outcomes defined in application:

- Children better prepared for school as a result of early learning and stable relationships with adults.
- Early elementary achievement gaps narrowed.
- Increased earnings for parents as a result of working/going to school.
- Children see/share in parents’ success

Reported outcomes and results: No measurement was conducted. The final report states: “It is not possible to measure change in individuals using the Debra S. Fish Library because the library launch took place at the close of the grant on June 30. Furthermore, gains in providers’ skills result from a range of activities, not just one source. The impact of the library in the context of the agency’s overall professional development efforts will be a focus of a new evaluation unit being established as a part of FY12 budgeting.”

Evaluation findings: The stated outcomes were too broad and/or unclear to be measured and attributed to the program. Probably for these reasons, there was no attempt to measure outcomes or results. Better

upfront planning would have highlighted this critical need to define results that had practical potential to be evaluated. The lack of outcome analysis does not detract from the progress that may have been made in establishing access to this library's materials and incorporation into the St. Paul Public Library System, but there was no translation into outcomes.

13. Assessing Competency in Northstar Digital Literacy Standards – 2011

(Mid-year information)

Residents (digital literacy)

Friends of Saint Paul Public Libraries

Project: Northstar Digital Literacy Standards had been developed to address the needs of people with little or no computer experience, and were used primarily in Adult Basic Education settings. The standards would bring consistency to the teaching of skills. Organizations using the standards would develop their own curriculum based on the needs of their populations served. An unaddressed need was assessing the actual skills learned in a consistent way. The purpose of the project was to create a comprehensive, online assessment that accurately and efficiently assesses the basic digital literacy skills of adults, as defined by Northstar Digital Literacy Standards, for each of five components of the Northstar Digital Literacy Standards: (1) Basic Computer Use, (2) Internet, (3) Windows OS, (4) Email, and (5) Word Processing. St. Paul Public Library partnered with the Saint Paul Community Literacy Consortium. The Consortium is a collaboration including the SPPL, eleven community-based nonprofits, and St. Paul Public Schools, Adult Basic Education. Early class attendance indicates a majority of people served will be adults, with a significant portion of the audience being English language learners. The outcomes were defined as:

- Development of an effective assessment tool that will demonstrate to individuals, employers, and literacy organizations whether the users have acquired the basic digital literacy competencies necessary for accessing library and other public services, searching and applying for jobs, and finding other basic information.
- Help strengthen workforce skills among individuals with significant barriers to employment.

Reported mid-year outcomes and results: As of the mid-year report, the first assessment module was piloted by 275 people. The evaluation at this point consists of (1) feedback on the design and process from the community via the task force, (2) pilot testing of the assessment modules to evaluate their effectiveness with end-users, and (3) fine tuning as necessary. Data includes a summary report from each pilot site providing: total completers, average and median number of correct answers, average and median scores, number of individuals achieving passing scores, and average and median time required to complete the assessment module. In addition, sites provided weekly feedback and this was used to make changes. As they prepare for implementation, they plan to hire an evaluation consultant to assess the overall impact of the assessment modules. They anticipate that the evaluation will incorporate statistical and subjective data, usage data, experiences of proctoring agencies, and other data from a range of community agencies and employers.

Evaluation findings: This is a 2011 project, so only a mid-year report was provided. Evaluation is scheduled to occur after the mid-year report was submitted. They have good data from the pilot testing of the assessment tool. However, no data for outcome measurement has been collected yet, as the evaluation phase has not begun.

14. Minnesota Legal Resources – 2008

Residents (access to legal resources)

Dakota County Law Library

Project: This project was a partnership with Dakota County Law Library, Dakota County Public Library, and the 4th Judicial District Self Help Center, to enhance the Minnesota Judicial Center Website Self Help Center. The purpose was to connect users with online legal information resources. LSTA funds were used to hire a staff lawyer from the 4th Judicial District to create content for the website. The website includes basic information and forms on legal topics of interest to the general public such as, landlord tenant law, probate law, name change, car title, and divorce law. Training on the Self Help Center website and legal documents for librarians was also included.

Reported outcomes and results: From the Final Report: “Since the purpose of the project was to pass content to the statewide virtual court Self Help Center website, there was not an outcome to measure. There is no way to track who accessed the new content, and what they used it for.”

Evaluation findings: Outcomes were not defined in the application. The application stated pre and post surveys at the librarian trainings would be administered, but no data or surveys were provided. Content for the website was created.

1C Project results (The statement of needs, LSTA Purposes, and State Plan goals are in Endnotes.⁴)

15. Teens 2 B Seen@ the Library – 2008 •

Teens

East Central Regional Library

Project: The project purpose was to develop and increase use of services for teens at East Central Regional Library’s fourteen branches. LSTA funds were used to purchase Wii gaming equipment, software, and board games. A variety of teen events were held, including gaming events, author visits, book groups, chess tournaments and Anime drawing classes. Funds also were used to purchase teen graphic novels, popular teen fiction, and 50 teen book club kits. The LSTA grant also funded a workshop for branch librarians on inspiring, developing, delivering, and managing teen services. In addition, a teen website was established.

Reported outcomes and results: From March to May 2009 the libraries hosted 27 events; 310 teens attended. Teens participating in the programs and staff attending the workshop were surveyed.

25% of teens attending new teen programs will indicate that because of the new teen programming they plan to visit their local ECRL branch more often.

- Of 301 surveyed, 71% of teens attending programs said they would visit their local library more often because they attended a teen program.

25% of teens attending program events and visiting the new ECRL teen website will indicate that they have learned more about their local library and the services it has to offer.

- No results: this question was not asked in the survey

50% of library staff will indicate that they feel more knowledgeable and comfortable about working with teen patrons after (1) attending the teen workshop and (2) completion of the grant period.

- Of 17 staff surveyed *before* the workshop, 57% felt they had the necessary knowledge to serve teens in their library; *after* the workshop, 79% felt they had the necessary knowledge
- In the post-grant survey, 93% of library staff reported they felt they had the necessary knowledge to serve teens in their library.

Evaluation findings: Teens 2 B Seen had well defined outcomes. The survey instruments directly addressed two of three defined outcomes. The second teen survey outcome was not dealt with in the survey. The post-grant survey reflected continued improvement in the measured outcome of staff feeling more knowledgeable working with teen patrons.

16. Family Read – Connecting Parents, Kids and Books – 2008

Families with Children

Metropolitan Library Services Agency (MELSA)

Project: The Family Read project promoted the concept that reading is a family activity and a necessary life skill by bringing families together through a series of 27 events featuring Minnesota authors and illustrators and 27 parent readers’ advisory workshops.

Reported outcomes and results:

Family Read

- Total attendance at the events was 481 people (185 adults, 296 children)
- Post-event evaluations were completed by 65 adults (35% of adults who attended).
- 100% of the respondents rated the programs as “great” or “very good”.

- 46% of respondents were aware that the number one reason children do not read is because they cannot find books they like.
- 70% of respondents were “very comfortable” helping their readers find books, 25% were “somewhat comfortable”, 5% noted they “could use some help”.

Parent reader advisory workshops

Twenty-seven parent reader advisory workshops were held from January- June 2009.

- Attendance was very low. Thirteen workshops had no attendees; 23 adults attended the other workshops.
- Of those who attended, 15 completed evaluations (65%).
- All the respondents rated the workshops as “great” or “very good”.
- All respondents felt the techniques were explained clearly and that they learned something new.

50% of respondents to follow up survey will report increased comfort levels and enjoyment in interacting with their children and books.

- All respondents to the parent workshop evaluation reported feeling more confident in their abilities to help their children choose books.

50% of respondents to follow up survey will report they have made use of materials covered in workshops.

- No mail-in surveys were returned (attendance at the workshops was very low)

50% of respondents to follow up survey will report increased confidence in their ability to make book recommendations to their children.

- All respondents to the parent workshop evaluation reported feeling more confident in their abilities to help their children choose books.

Evaluation findings: Outcomes were clearly defined and linked to the surveys for both the author/illustrator events and the parent readers’ advisory workshops. The barrier to good outcome data for the parent readers’ advisory workshops was low attendance and a poor response rate to the follow-up survey. No information is available to determine if adjustments were made to improve attendance at these workshops.

17. Ready for College: Lifelong Information Literacy Skills – 2009 **Students (high school)** **Robbinsdale Cooper High School**

Project: The goal of the Cooper High School project was to improve information literacy skills for students to better prepare them for college and lifelong learning. Cooper High School has a diverse, high-poverty student population, with 40 percent qualifying for Free and Reduced Priced Lunch. Ten teachers were trained in information and technology literacy and led 600 students through information literacy instruction as part of research projects. The LSTA grant funded computer resources, training, and collaboration time for teachers and the media specialist, and an evaluation process.

Reported outcomes and results: Information literacy skill tests were developed by the media center librarian and the school district’s Director for Research, Evaluation, and Assessment. The tests were given to participating students at the beginning and end of instruction to assess skills they had learned. Students were also given the option to take the iSkills (later called iCritical Thinking Certification) test at the end of the school year. Only 25 students took the test, and all but one passed. Participant teachers were also requested to take the iSkills test and pre and post tests, but no information on the assessment of the teachers’ learned skills was provided.

Increased information literacy skills of students were measured by pre- and post-tests:

- Scores increased on 30 of 44 questions (68%).
- Overall average scores increased 2%.

75 students took the iSkills (iCritical Thinking) assessment, and 70% scored 165 or higher for certification.

- Of 25 students took the test, 24 students passed and earned the certification

Survey seniors mid-way through their first post-secondary year to learn how prepared they felt in college and the workforce: Not completed (due to staff changes)

Increase information literacy skills in teacher-leaders: No data or conclusions were provided

Evaluation findings: The pre and post tests were clearly focused on the skills learned by the students and were a good assessment tool. The number of students electing to take the iCritical Thinking Certification was much lower than the goal due to, according to the project manager, the difficulty of getting high school students to take an elective test at the end of the school year. Project evaluation was incomplete following retirement of the media specialist at the end of the first year.

18. North End Audiobooks Buds – 2008
Students (middle school and students in poverty)
Washington Technical Magnet School

Project: The project goal was to improve the reading level growth, by more than one year, of middle school students aged 12 to 14 and children living in poverty. Washington Technical Magnet School consists of 65 percent English Language Learners (ELL) students, and 91 percent of the students live in poverty. LSTA funds were used to purchase 348 audiobooks players (called PlayAways) which stored one book each. The audiobooks allowed struggling readers to be exposed to a broader array of literature. Students listened to a book while following along with the text. After completing each book, students were offered the option to participate in the Accelerated Reader program by taking a short quiz about the book on the computer. Another goal of this project was to increase participation in the Accelerated Reader program by students taking a short reading comprehension quiz for each audiobook checked-out. In the summer, the audiobooks were loaned to the Rice Street Library for student access during the summer break.

Reported outcomes and results: Twenty-two percent (165) of the Washington Technical Magnet School students checked-out 167 audiobooks from October 2008 through May 2009. No circulation statistics were collected for summer use of audiobooks at the Rice Street Library. Growth in reading level was measured with the Scholastic Reading Inventory test, administered three times during the school year.

Improve the reading level of middle school students by more than one year

- The reading levels of those students using the audiobooks increased by 1.23 years.

Audiobook users will take Accelerated Reader quizzes

- 134 students took Accelerated Reader quizzes

Evaluation findings: The outcome of growth in reading level was clear and directly measured by the Scholastic Reading Inventory test. The relationship between the use of audiobooks and tested advancement in reading levels is not clear. As a contributing factor to the advancement, the use of audiobooks likely was a supporting influence. More data on circulation was proposed in the application but not provided, specifically data from the Rice Street Library on summer use of the audiobooks. The explanation for this missing information was because the materials had to be re-catalogued for the public library system in order to track circulation and this did not happen.

19. Where We're From: Honoring Our Stories – 2009
Students (low income, minority, elementary school)
Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet School

Project: The project purpose was to guide students to learn and value a culture, to create digital cultural archives, and to preserve the stories and teachings of community elders. The school library media specialist, the Hmong studies coordinator, and a content coach worked with students to collect and archive oral histories pertaining to Hmong history, cultural traditions, and art. The program was school-wide, with an in-depth year-long study for fifth graders. Students used primary source information available in the school library. Multiple literacy skills were taught, including digital, visual, textual and technological. Students improved their literacy skills and language acquisition by listening to, transcribing, reading and editing transcripts of the interviews and stories collected. They also created written pieces of their own based on the interviews and videos. The school partnered with the Minnesota Historical Society and the Center for Hmong Studies at Concordia College. In 2010, the project won the Saint Paul Public Schools "Showcase 2010" award and a prize of \$5,000. The films were accepted into the Hmong Film Festival at Metropolitan State University in 2010.

Reported outcomes and results:

- 1a. Fifth grade students will use technology ethically and responsibly to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view and use.
- 1b. Students in grades 4-6 will make sense of information gathered from diverse sources
- 1c. Students in grade K-6 will use technology and information tools to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view and use
- 1d. Students in grades 4-6 will find, evaluate, and select appropriate sources
 - 15 high quality videos were created
 - Less than one-third of students could identify any of the divisions within the non-fiction section of the library at the beginning of the year; over 90% could identify at least half of them by end of year.
2. Access to cataloged and posted products via Phalen Media Center or school website
 - A comparison of Hmong resource checkouts was not possible due to cataloging issues.
 - Anecdotal evidence from the library media specialist showed that a separate collection of materials about the Hmong did increase their use greatly.
 - Videos could not be posted on the school website due to SPPS District limitations on file size. The library is working with the district to get more capacity on the server so these videos can be posted.
- 3a. Students will demonstrate increased information literacy skills to display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can use view and assess
- 3b. Fifth grade students will use technology ethically and responsibly to organize and display knowledge and understanding in ways that others can view and use
 - Students presented projects at the school Creativity Fair, Movie Premiere, and the 2010 Showcase
 - 584 students were involved.
4. Staff and students will create new and strengthen existing relationships with grant partners and community members
 - Community and partnership experts made 34 visits
 - Field trips were made to seven partnership sites: Minnesota Historical Society, Concordia College Center For Hmong Studies, HmongTown, Center for Hmong Arts and Talent (CHAT), Great Harvest, Blacksmith, Hmonglish play

Evaluation findings: Outcomes for this project were defined, but often in ways that would make measurement difficult. Outcomes assessment was very limited for a variety of reasons. A student survey was conducted to assess what students learned in the media center training. Summary survey information was included in the Final Report but data and survey instruments were not provided in regular reporting. The information was requested for this evaluation, but no data or summary was available. Circulation information was provided anecdotally. Usage data for the Hmong materials was not available because the materials were not catalogued in a manner that allowed them to be queried.

20. Serving Teens and Tweens @ Your Library – 2009**Teens and pre-Teens****Southeast Libraries Cooperating (SELCO)**

Project: The project purpose was to support local teen boards by providing them with the tools to encourage their peers to participate in library programming and use library materials and services. The project helped strengthen Teen Advisory Boards in four public libraries, improve young adult services and programming, and foster communication between the 12-17 age group and public library staff. With input from the teen boards, program kits were created. The kits included programming ideas, promotional materials and web resources to encourage increased library use by teens and tweens. SELCO hired a part-time project librarian to manage the project, attend regular Teen Advisory Board meetings at each of the participating libraries, and gather ideas about specific consoles, games, and materials to include in the gaming/activity kits. A website was created containing all the information on the kits, how to order them, the history of the program, and a blog for the Teen Advisory Boards to discuss their programs

Reported outcomes and results: No outcomes were defined for the project. Four branch libraries used the kits and held events such as casino nights and game nights. The outputs included:

- Nine kits (eight programming and one promotional, all available to patrons of all the libraries in the region),

- 41 hits to the website
- 81 teens attended four events.
- Several teens decided to join a Teen Advisory Board after attending an event.

Evaluation findings: No formal outcome definition or measurement occurred. The project librarian conducted interviews of participants at each of the four programs and reported that the responses were positive but no data or interview questionnaires were provided.

21. Feed Your Mind – Literacy, Reading and School Readiness – 2008 **Children Living in Poverty** **Friends of the Saint Paul Public Library**

Project: Feed Your Mind was a partnership between the St. Paul Public Library and Keystone Community Services. Keystone runs two food shelf facilities in St. Paul. The purpose of the project was to improve access to literacy information for families in poverty. Families visiting the food shelf were exposed to posters encouraging reading. Literacy materials they could take home included: a “read around the table” wheel with activities for families to engage in with children to develop literacy skills; children’s books with stickers on each featuring the SPPL logo and website address; a bookmark with a map showing Keystone and SPPL library locations; and contact information for the facilities including in English, Spanish, Somali and Hmong the words “Library”, “Free”, and “Welcome”.

Reported outcomes and results: The application stated that a survey would be conducted to assess the following outcomes:

50% of respondents to the follow-up survey would report:

- increased comfort levels and enjoyment in interacting with their children and books.
- they have made use of materials covered in workshops.
- increased confidence in their ability to make book recommendation to their children.

Two hundred and fifty people took home information about literacy development activities and reading with young children, including information on where the nearest Library is located. No survey was conducted; nor was any other information supporting the outcomes collected.

Evaluation findings: Only use data (literature distribution) was recorded. No outcome data was attempted to be obtained. No measurement of intended outcomes occurred. Based on post-project inquiry, the project was scaled down from the original plan in the application due to the significant increase in food shelf demand during the grant period. This increase in food shelf use made it impossible to engage staff in training or for the staff to support the project through record-keeping.

2A Project results (The statement of needs, LSTA Purposes, and State Plan goals are in Endnotes.⁵)

22. Librarians Lending a Hand – 2010 ♦ **Residents (access to legal resources)** **Washington County Law Library**

Project: The purpose of Librarians Lending a Hand was to train the public on how to access and use legal resources online. The LSTA grant funded a mobile computer lab so staff and volunteer lawyers could train the public in several locations throughout the county. Twelve seminars were developed and conducted: Bankruptcy Clinic; Conciliatory Court Basics; Unmarried Parents’ Rights; Divorce Basics; Tenant/Landlord Rights and Remedies; Bankruptcy Basics; Consumer Debt Relief; Child Support – Rights and Obligations; Legal Research and Online Resources; Expungement of Criminal; Records, Child Custody/ Parenting Time Basics; and Basic Estate Planning.

Reported outcomes and results: Twelve seminars were conducted with 120 participants. The following outcomes were examined with surveys at each seminar:

- Participants will gain the knowledge to use Minnesota legal resources to accomplish their individual objectives.
 - Participants will become more informed of options and legal tools available through online services.
- Self-assessment evaluation forms were administered at each seminar. Participants were asked to agree or disagree with several statements on a scale of 1–5 (1 being “strongly disagree” and 5 “strongly agree”). The resulting data are shown here in abbreviated form as the averages across all seminars for the 120 attendees who completed the survey.
1. Before the seminar you had an adequate level of experience or knowledge about the topic.
 - Average score for all participants: 2.75
 2. As a result of the seminar you believe you are now better informed and prepared to move forward to resolve any legal issues.
 - Average score for all participants: 4.01
 3. As a result of the seminar you believe you have learned about some services, forms, resources you now can utilize to solve your personal legal issues.
 - Average score for all participants: 4.33

In these post surveys for all the seminars, participants reported being better informed, more prepared to move forward on their own legal issues, and that they learned about resources they can use to solve their personal legal issues.

Evaluation findings: The outcomes for this project were well defined and clearly linked to the questions asked in the surveys. The questions might have been asked with more parallel language to show directly comparable results and the increment of improvement pre- and post-workshops. In general, however, the survey data provided strong evidence for assessing outcome attainment.

23. E-Book and E-Reader – 2011 (mid-year information) **Library staff (training) and residents (access to audiobooks)** **Traverse de Sioux Library System**

Project: The project purpose is to expand services/access to patrons by offering enhanced downloadable e-book services. LSTA funds were used for equipment and a training package for staff and the public.

Reported mid-year outcomes and results: The following items listed in the outcomes section of the application are stated as outcomes. Other listed items were outputs.

- Library staff gain knowledge of OverDrive compatible e-reading devices.
- Library staff gain understanding of DRM and e-text formats.
- Library staff will be able to identify key differences between various e-readers and where to locate consumer information about reading devices.
- Library staff gain hands-on experience with OverDrive using at least two devices.
- Library patrons will choose to use e-books and audio service.

The application states that staff will be surveyed at six and twelve months to determine usage of downloadable materials and training needs. As of the mid-year report, one training class has been completed. Of the library staff attending the class, 36 completed pre- and post- class surveys. The staff were asked to provide a rating on a scale of zero to five for these questions:

1. What is your familiarity with downloading e-books to a Nook?
2. What is your familiarity with downloading e-books to an iPad, iPod or iPhone?
3. How comfortable are you with assisting patrons with questions about downloading the e-books?

Ratings from the pre-survey to the post-survey went up for all three questions and in most cases went from a zero or one to a four or five.

Evaluation findings: The outcomes listed in the application were not very focused or precisely worded making them hard to measure. In addition, many of the listed outcomes are outputs. The project is at the mid-year point and on track with the proposed schedule for evaluation. The outcomes should have been more focused and clearly defined, however, the survey questions seem to assess the program intent well. Pre- and post- surveys for participants of the staff training class were administered and the data provided.

24. Community School Media Centers as Online Partners – 2010

Schools/students (online access)

Southeast Library System (SELS)

Project: The LSTA grant for this project enabled two school library media centers, Bonner Elementary and Central Intermediate School, to join the regional system of Southeast Libraries Cooperating (SELCO) ILS online libraries. The project multiplied the materials available and expanded their capacities to serve students. The addition of these two schools' library media centers to SELCO ILS completed the automation process for the Stewartville Public School District.

Reported outcomes and results: A survey was used to ask the faculty of the two schools to compare experiences with the previous catalog to those with the new catalog. Eleven teachers or staff responded to the survey, indicating nearly all students in their classes used the library to check out materials during the school year. Approximately one-third of the students had successfully requested materials at the library. None of the teachers surveyed thought the old system was preferable to the new one. In terms of circulation for the 2010-11 school year, 933 students and 69 faculty borrowers were registered. The schools received through SELCO ILS 565 items and sent to other SELCO libraries 346 items.

Evaluation findings: Outcomes were not defined beyond increasing library use. Survey data was very limited and incomplete. No comparison data were provided for the survey questions or the circulation statistics; therefore, measurement of improvement results was not possible.

25. Community Libraries as Online Partners – 2010

Library (collection migration and access)

Southeast Library System (SELS)

Project: The purpose of the project was to migrate the Chatfield Music Lending Library (CMLL) collection of sheet music to the SELS Integrated Library System so the collection would be accessible to high school, college and community college bands as well as the general public. The collection includes some rare items and no other library lends this type of band and orchestra music. The migration of documents began with a 2008 LSTA grant (see below) and was expanded with this grant.

Reported outcomes and results: The outcomes for the project included (1) increased awareness by musicians of the collection; and (2) increased awareness by CMLL staff and board members of available resources. CMLL administered a survey in June 2011; however, the circulation of the material began only three months earlier. Therefore, the response rate was low with only five surveys returned. Of those respondents, all indicated they found the materials they were looking for and three discovered materials they were not aware of before using the collection. SELS and CMLL also collected comments from patrons and board members in anticipation of the lack of timely survey response. The comments were reported to be overwhelming positive and appreciative of the collection. From March 2011 to January 2012, circulation of the materials was 306 items.

Evaluation findings: The survey administered received a very low response rate with only five surveys returned. The questions on the survey completely match the stated outcomes, but measurement of results so far has been weak.

26. Community Libraries as Online Partners – 2008

Library (collection migration for access)

Southeast Library System

Project: LSTA funds enabled the Chatfield Music Lending Library (CMLL) to become a SELCO Integrated Library System (ILS) online library by assisting in the migration of data from an unsupported database platform to the SELCO system. No other organization in the world collects or lends this type of music and the collection serves as a resource to southeastern Minnesota as well as nationally and internationally. Outcomes defined in the application included making it easier for patrons to request items and increasing the likelihood patrons will continue to use the CMLL. The application stated this information would be gathered anecdotally.

Reported outcomes and results: According to the final report, patrons felt that certain features made the new system easier to use. A total of 31,542 records (1.1 million pieces of sheet music) were made available to loan. Over the course of the four months from going online until the end of the grant, 119 new patrons were registered with the CMLL.

Evaluation findings: This project had limited outcome-based evidence. The planned measurement provided for only anecdotal information and usage statistics. They did show an increase in the number of patrons but only anecdotal information was gathered on the benefits to them. A survey of a sample of users, for example, may have resulted in better defined benefits.

27. Shaping the 21st Rural Library – 2009

Library (media center development) Pioneerland Library System

Project: The LSTA funds were used to develop a media center in the Ortonville Public Library. The media center helped to meet the community's need for new technologies, partnerships and meeting space. The media center provided space for regional economic activities, county emergency activities and cultural activities. The project targeted rural and high poverty communities, seniors and children 0-17 years of age, as well as adults facing employment challenges. The grant funded laptop computers, a LCD projector, a Smart Board with speakers, a wireless printer/copier/scanner, a Nintendo Wii, software for ACT/SAT exams, and Photoshop Elements software. To assess the programming needs for a media center, the library surveyed the community. Results were used to help select programs and instructors and decide what software to purchase. These outcomes were defined:

- New community partnerships will develop and evolve.
- Adults will be exposed to new information and increase their skills and knowledge.
- Perceptions of the library will change/evolve to be viewed as a valuable community resource.
- Local civic groups will be strengthened as a result of providing access to common space and coordinated activities.

Reported outcomes and results: Results included 265 events scheduled. The total number of people attending events in the media center was 1,362. Some of these individuals attended multiple events making the total person-event attendance 3,656. The Minnesota Workforce Center has a staff person at the media center twice a month. Minnesota West campuses have a representative there once a month to help those looking for further education.

Evaluation findings: The initial focus of data collection at the start of the project was to assess the needs for a media center. This appears to have been done in a thorough way. The survey was provided with the final report. The survey information is comprehensive and was used in decision-making. However, the outcomes were not measured except for use by patrons, measured with attendance data at media center events. Survey data from the attendees, for example, would have addressed the measurement of results from the use of these grant funds and addressed the evaluation questions.

28. Access MN Newspaper Holdings – 2008

Library (collection migration to online catalog) Minnesota Historical Society

Project: This project was the expansion of an LSTA funded pilot project to migrate newspaper holdings to the MHS online MnPALS library catalog. The goal was to provide better access to this resource. The collection, which includes 4,254 Minnesota newspapers published since in 1849, is the most complete and comprehensive Minnesota newspaper collection in the world.

Reported outcomes and results: No outcomes were defined or measured. The LSTA grant allowed MHS to barcode 26,778 reels of microfilm completing two-thirds of the migration process.

Evaluation findings: No outcomes were defined, only outputs. No measurement was conducted of the goal to provide better access to MHS's newspaper resources. It is not clear whether only barcoding would define the intended results from this project, since no outcome-type goals were stated.

29. Laptops for LINK Sites – 2008
Rural libraries (laptops for wireless access)
Lake Agassiz Regional Library

Project: LINK sites had wireless capabilities but users needed a laptop to access the wireless network. The purpose of this project was to enable residents of small rural communities to access the internet to meet the library's mission of "linking people and communities to resources and experiences for learning and enrichment." LSTA funds were used to purchase three laptops to be used at LINK sites in rural Minnesota.

Reported outcomes and results: In a six month time period across the three LINK sites, the laptops were used 242 times; falling slightly short of the library's projected 270 uses.

Evaluation findings: No outcomes were defined in application or final report. Outputs included the number of times the laptops were used. Monthly usage statistics were generated, including for the post-grant period. A survey of users' access and uses of the laptops may have been useful.

30. Video Service Plan for hcl.org and HCL – 2011
Library system (video capabilities expansion)
Hennepin County Library

Project: The purpose of this project was to develop and implement a model for delivering access to library services, information, programs, and training by video. The aim was to expand HCL's capabilities to use video technology to reach customers at any time. The planned outputs included a portfolio of video content, a marketing plan, usage statistics, an evaluation plan, and a service plan.

Reported mid-year outcomes and results: The mid-year report states that as video content is developed, library patrons and community partners will be asked to assess needs and quality standards for library-created video content. The application states that HCL will contract with a consultant to evaluate the project and they have budgeted \$3,000 for evaluation.

Evaluation findings: As of mid-year, a needs assessment from library staff had been completed. They plan to do evaluation in the coming months with a consultant. No additional end-user outcomes or methods to gather information from users were defined in the application or the mid-year report.

31. Website Makeover – 2008
Library system (website update)
Traverse de Sioux Library System

Project: The purpose of Website Makeover project was to update the Traverse de Sioux (TdS) Library System website. In addition, they proposed to establish a template to assist member libraries in developing websites at the local level. The website would be ADA compliant. The planned outcomes included:

- Increased ease of use and recognition of websites
- Increased awareness of TdS and its services
- Increased web design and maintenance skills for TdS staff

Reported outcomes and results: Based on information from a recent interview, the website work was completed and implemented in ten small (one staff person) branch libraries.

Evaluation findings: Based on available documentation, none of the outcomes were assessed or measured. The library system staff provided basic information verbally, but documentation was not available.

32. Koha Open Source ILS Implementation Project – 2011 (mid-year report)
Library system (open source ILS implementation)
Plum Creek Library System

Project: LSTA funds were used to implement Minnesota's first Koha Open Source Integrated Library Automated System (ILS). The stated primary goal for the project was to provide easy user access to library materials and information in an equitable and timely fashion. The project would implement Koha Open Source ILS; demonstrate Koha Open Source's effectiveness and cost benefits; create a foundation for an environment for MN libraries to deliver automation services in a cost-effective and sustainable manner; and

build the capacity to offer low-cost web hosting and data back-up options. Once the system is implemented the project will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Efficiency of implementation (ability to stay on timeline, vendor performance, etc.)
- Effective ILS operation (user surveys, member library staff surveys, etc.)
- Effective use of new technologies (speed of backup services for minimum system downtime, ability to use virtual computing to save technology staff support time, etc.)

Reported mid-year outcomes and results: This project is in the implementation phase and evaluation has not yet begun.

Evaluation findings: The evaluation will occur once the system is implemented. Goals and project evaluation criteria include user outcomes. User and staff surveys are planned to be administered for spring 2012. Survey instruments were not included in the mid-year report.

33. Mobile Laptop Training Lab – 2011 (mid-year report) **Library system (mobile laptop training lab)** **Viking Library System**

Project: The project purpose was to offer training opportunities to the public for resources and technologies available to them in the library system. LSTA funds were used to buy eleven laptop computers for a mobile laptop training lab to be used by all libraries in the Viking Library System. The proposed trainings include VLS catalog, MnLINK, ELM resources, downloadable audiobooks and e-books, genealogical training, social networking, and YouTube. Viking Library System will measure whether the trainings were found to be useful by (1) surveying library staff after each training to assess the usefulness of the training; (2) conducting a follow-up staff survey assessing whether the training was adequate preparation for training patrons and whether or not they would prefer a refresher training; and (3) surveying patrons who participate in the trainings to assess the effectiveness of the trainings. They plan to conduct the surveys three, six and twelve months after the trainings.

Reported mid-year outcomes and results: Evaluations have not begun.

Evaluation findings: The evaluation plan outlined in the application appears to be well developed overall. At this time, no surveys have been developed. The project was slowed down by a need to upgrade their DNS server. The issues were resolved and the project is now on track. They have compiled lists of various training preferences from the branch libraries and are moving forward with the trainings.

2B Project results (The statement of needs, LSTA Purposes, and State Plan goals are in Endnotes.⁶)

34. Marketing and Public Services – 2008 to 2011 **Statewide services for persons with visual special needs** **Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library**

Primary users: Institutionalized persons, people with special needs, seniors

Secondary users: Blind and visually impaired persons, developmentally disabled, homebound persons

Primary services: information access and services, interlibrary loan, outreach.

Secondary services: collection development, database access, reference services, document and materials delivery, resource sharing, books-by-mail, homebound services, special needs

Projects: The LSTA grants funded *direct service staff* in the Library. LSTA paid positions include the Library Program Director, Library Information Resources Services Specialists (currently 2 FTE), and Customer Service Specialists (currently 2 FTE). The number of LSTA-funded FTEs has varied between three and five during this evaluation period. The Library currently has a total of 8.5 FTE employees. The Library also utilizes volunteers including State Academy for the Blind students, Faribault High School students, Sentence to Service crews, Older Workers Program participants, and others. The volunteers are either unpaid or paid from non-LSTA funds. The Library has received funds left available at the end of fiscal years from other incomplete grant projects. Those funds helped pay for an assistive technology workstation

(computer hardware and software), Playaways, catalog of large print books, library publications printed in Spanish and recorded in audio, and hardware and software for a digital recording studio.

The Library provides specialized public library services statewide to Minnesotans of all ages with visual, physical, and reading disabilities. The Library partners with the National Library Services (NLS)⁷ and the Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB).⁸ Organizationally, the Library is part of the Minnesota State Library Services, the SLAA for LSTA grants. The library's collection is similar to what is available in a medium-sized Minnesota public library. The library serves mostly people 64 years old or older, many of whom lived in the sighted world and are transitioning to vision loss environment. However, people of all ages can access these services – for example, students to help meet their academic needs. The circulating collection currently includes 50,594 digital books, 380,177 cassette books, 5,790 large-print books, 28,720 Braille books, 405 described videos, and 365 Playaway Digital items. The conversion from analog to digital media is a significant ongoing effort for both the library's patrons and the library staff.

Direct recipients of materials from the Library number about 10,000 each year. The Library provides additional information and support to caregivers, educators, school districts, and others. The Library is located on the campus of the Minnesota State Academy for the Blind, and provides school library services to the students and staff and to deaf-blind students of these two state academies.

Output statistics⁹ and demographics

	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011
Individuals served (registered readers)	9,994	10,095	10,172	10,050
Institutions served ¹⁰	880	876	870	898
Book circulation (total circulated items)	300,988	276,824	305,739	314,768
Average no. of books mailed out each business day	1,194	1,102	1,223	1,323
Average no. of returned books processed each bus. day	1,131	1,023	1,176	1,259

FY2008 activities, outputs, and other results

The Library's direct service staff began planning and implementation of steps to extend the Library mission to additional special needs communities and persons identified in the State Plan (seniors, persons with disabilities, children 0-17 living in poverty, and New Americans), focusing on marketing, promotion, and direct customer service initiatives. The Library director led the initiative in cooperation with the Regional Public Library Systems and the Multitype Library Systems. During this period, 94 new users were registered for the NLS Braille and Download (BARD) service. Book downloads quadrupled from the previous year. Staff contacted, by letter and phone, veterans and older seniors for interest in the newly available talking books downloads and digital players.

FY2009 activities, outputs, and other results

FY2009 activities continue the framework and purposes for extending services and outreach described in the preceding paragraph (FY2008). During FY2009, the marketing, promotion, and direct customer service initiatives grew further. Circulation increased as a result of the addition of digital talking books in the fall of 2009 (increase of 8 percent from previous fiscal year). Library service staff contacted existing patrons regarding their interest in the new digital players. By the end of the federal fiscal year, 3,300 Library patrons had received digital players. Veterans and 100+ year olds were given priority. NLS handed over the approval process and registration for BARD access to the Library. The Library distributed download instructions to all registered Minnesota BARD users. Library patrons downloaded 24,358 books and magazines in the fiscal year, nearly triple the number in the previous fiscal year.

FY2010 activities, outputs, and other results

The Library continues to contact patrons regarding interest in the digital talking book players. Nearly 5,000 Library patrons are receiving books by mail or through the BARD (713 individuals and 21 institutions were registered to use MN BARD as of October 2011. Library patrons downloaded nearly 43,000 books and magazines in Federal Fiscal Year 2011, a 41 percent increase over the previous fiscal year. The outreach regarding digital talking books has had significant impact – digital books circulation was ahead of cassette circulation by two to one. Through state and LSTA grants, the library purchased blank digital cartridges

and shipping containers to produce local copies of digital titles, which supplement the main collections. The Library also plans to establish a local recording program to move from analog to digital format collections.

FY2011 activities, outputs, and other results (half-year)

The Library is continuing the transition to digital talking books. Staff contacts continue with a variety of groups to respond to the questions and issues about digital talking books and player options. Book downloads continue to grow in volume. The capabilities for local recording to move from analog to digital formats are being developed and expanded.

Outcomes

Although not required to be provided for statewide grants funding, end-user outcomes from LSTA funding (direct staff services) are readily ascertainable. The funded services do not *by themselves* account for the end results (note the critical partnership relationship descriptions above), but the LSTA funded staff activities are *necessary* to the results. The Library has anecdotal information that provides insights, by direct example, of the types of end-user benefits. Available examples illustrate the usual types of library services outcomes as they pertain to this special needs community – for example, in lifelong-learning,¹¹ connections to community and daily activities,¹² and student success.¹³

Evaluation findings:

The Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library fills a unique role in providing public library services to these special need populations, working in partnership with state and federal agencies. The output measures generally show moderate growth in transactions and persons served. Minnesota demographics of aging would support the proposition that library services to compensate for visual and physical impairment conditions will grow in the next couple decades. Although outcomes are not specifically asked for in the evaluation of statewide projects, the comments that were included in this evaluation portray very strong end-user benefits from the services of the Library.

35. Interlibrary Loan and Delivery – 2008 to 2011 **Statewide delivery collaborative and backbone network** **Minitex Library Information Network**

Primary users: Statewide public

Primary services: Interlibrary loan

Secondary services: Document and materials delivery, resource sharing

LSTA funds pay for Minitex services on the basis of unit costs per request received and processed, and items delivered, all based on cost recovery. Minitex provides technology, staff, couriers, and supplies required for interlibrary loan and delivery services for public, school, and museum libraries. Minitex is a program of the Minnesota Office of Higher Education and the University of Minnesota Libraries.

Projects: Minitex Resource Sharing manages interlibrary loan lending requests for items owned at the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities Campus Libraries. Minitex also acts as an intermediary for resource sharing and will refer requests from participating libraries to other libraries in the region when appropriate. In addition, Minitex has negotiated borrowing and lending agreements with state library agencies or library consortia in North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Alberta, Canada. The Minitex delivery "backbone network," provides delivery of library materials to participating libraries. Incoming materials are sorted and packed for shipment, often by commercial carriers. Materials are delivered overnight five days a week to most libraries in the Minitex region. Libraries not on the Minitex courier route receive service by UPS. Between 2008 and 2011, many changes to the Minitex systems were in response to requests from public libraries to *reduce* the request volume through the MnLINK Gateway.¹⁴

Output statistics and demographics (FY2011 is July to Dec. 2011)

	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011
Requests received from public libraries and K-12	207,967	201,976	189,405	89,751
Items delivered to public libraries	318,708	341,898	332,153	170,381
"Courtesy returns" ¹⁵	10,881	10,572	12,111	5,306
MnLINK public help desk responses	788	1,189	842	514

FY2008 activities, outputs, and other results

Several important technology enhancements were introduced in 2008, including some that included Minitex providing training to library staff through webinars. The NCIP addition to the MnLINK Gateway eliminated duplication of functions for libraries. Traverse des Sioux studied the benefits from its adoption of the new system and found that it reduced staff time to process interlibrary loans by 27 percent for borrowing and 42 percent for lending. Another enhancement to services, requested by library directors and their ILL staff, was the Amazon Date and Price lookup service, which sets parameters for staff review of requests before items go to potential lenders. Minitex provided webinar training for libraries. The service is now used by fourteen MnLINK Gateway server sites. The ISO Interlibrary Loan Protocol was implemented, allowing requests to be transferred between two different interlibrary loan systems. Minitex also began checking availability for all requests sent to MnLINK Gateway so that requests were sent to libraries only for available items. This change significantly increased the ILL referral fill rate from 50% to 78%.

FY2009 activities, outputs, and other results

In 2009 a major upgrade to the MnLINK Gateway was implemented. Webinars were conducted to provide library staff with training. A new option for batch updating was introduced and streamlined processing of materials. An automated User Alerts system was implemented to the ILL system, allowing many libraries to send email notifications with updates to persons who make ILL requests. Fourteen libraries currently use these email notifications. Staff workflow enhancements were made, enabling Minitex staff to increase the VDX referral rate from 78% to 84%. The effect of this change has been to reduce the number of requests sent to libraries when the item is not available. Scheduling changes to coordinate University of Minnesota holidays and closures with public library schedules have helped ensure appropriate levels of staffing for prompt processing, filling of orders, and delivery.

FY2010 activities, outputs, and other results

Technology enhancements continued to occur in FY2010. The VDX ILL software was enhanced to work with the Millennium ILS, giving libraries using this system an option for decreasing staff time spent processing ILL requests. New technology was added that automatically verifies the OCLC WorldCat identifying number and locations for VDX ILL requests. With adoption of this technology there was a review of related manual work processes and a significant reduction in staffing. On a broader scale, staff examined the entire workflow processes starting with receipt of items and ending with sending of the items. Delays and unnecessary steps were eliminated – part of the continuing effort to adopt work efficiencies while incorporating new technologies and software. Online video tutorials were created for public library staff and end users of the MnLINK Gateway. The tutorials have had over 3,000 views. These tutorials are developed when there are technology enhancements needing user training. MnLINK brochures and bookmarks were updated and distributed.

FY2011 activities, outputs, and other results (half-year)

Minitex staff members are testing an upgrade to the MnLINK Gateway software. The enhancement would reduce a currently labor intensive part of the ILL process – removing much of the need for library staff review and management of certain types of requests. Webinar training will be provided to library staff. Additionally, an RFP is being prepared for courier services to motivate increasing levels of customer service and improved delivery times to multiple locations.

Outcomes

Although not required to provide evidence of outcome based evaluation in the same manner as the competitive grantees,¹⁶ Minitex collects a considerable amount of information about user experiences with its services. This mostly anecdotal information includes comments about many topics, including efficient interlibrary loan and delivery,¹⁷ value of training provided by Minitex staff,¹⁸ access to resources for research and education,¹⁹ access to unique materials,²⁰ and cost savings.²¹

Evaluation findings

The efficient and economical interchange of library materials is an essential part of services to libraries and library systems. The outcomes, although somewhat masked by the volume of the endeavor, are diverse and cumulatively very significant. In addition to individual end-user outcomes, the benefits of a backbone interlibrary loan and delivery system for resource sharing on a statewide scale also occur at many levels

within the systems that it supports. Anecdotal information, such as the examples in footnotes, provides clues to the nature of the contribution to achieving benefits that libraries attain with their end-users.

36. Statewide Reference and Training – 2008 to 2011

Core services for all Minnesota libraries: ELM training, reference and outreach Minitex Library Information Network

LSTA funds and state funds from the Minnesota Office of Higher Education supported the Minitex Reference Outreach and Instruction program (formerly Reference Services) to answer reference referrals from all types of libraries and end users throughout Minnesota and provide on-site and web-based instruction on the Electronic Library for Minnesota (ELM) and other reference topics.

Projects:

The projects for FY2008 through FY2011 included ELM training and support as well as reference referral and reference training. Based on a reduction of LSTA funding for Federal Fiscal Year 2011, the Reference and Referral grant dropped from \$170,000 to \$70,000. Starting on July 1, 2011, Minitex stopped accepting reference referrals from Minnesota libraries and schools.

Output statistics and demographics (FY2011 is year-to-date)

	FY2008	FY2009	FY2010	FY2011
ELM instruction – total sessions (webinars and on-site)	128	176	163	141
ELM instruction – topics covered	22	30	48	49
ELM instruction - attendees	1,842	2,527	2,696	2,221
ELM support – questions answered	325	936	300	264
Reference related instruction – total sessions (webinars, on-site)	61	76	54	0
Reference related instruction – attendees	825	1,007	536	0
Reference referrals – total questions	226	526	395	0
Reference Notes newsletter online – website page views	20,599	30,869	33,411	6,033

Activities, outputs, and other results

As noted in the chart above, ELM instruction and reference referrals and training are the principal activities over the grant period. Reference referrals have been discontinued.

Outcomes and results

Although Minitex Reference and Training is not required to provide outcomes beyond the descriptive and statistical measures, the staff collect and organize user comments that provide insights into the end-user benefits from these services. The benefits accrue to library staff and to library patrons. Among the types of end-user benefits from these services are research assistance,²² student achievement,²³ resource sharing services,²⁴ library staff training to keep current and upgrade skills,²⁵ and providing information tools to access resources that meet many needs for individuals, including saving money.²⁶

Evaluation findings

The comprehensive reporting done by the Reference and Training is detailed and oriented to the activities and transactions conducted by the staff members (outputs). The transaction figures do not adequately represent the types of benefits to library staff members and library patrons from these services. Anecdotal information about individuals' and libraries' uses of the services and the benefits (examples included in the endnotes) provide a richer sense of outcomes than do the statistics alone.

Appendices

1. Acronyms and definitions

ECRL: East Central Regional Library System

ELM: Electronic Library for Minnesota

GRRL: Great River Regional Library System

IMLS: Institute of Museum and Library Services

LSTA: Library Services and Technology Act

MELSA: Metropolitan Library Service Agency

SELCO-SELS: Southeastern Libraries Cooperating – Southeast Library System

IMLS definitions that provide evaluation guidance

Results-based management (outcome-based evaluation and planning): a type of management process that relies on assessing results from enacting and implementing strategies for guiding future decisions.

Evaluation: the art of systematically collecting, analyzing, and using information to answer questions about results from enacting and implementing strategies and activities in policies, programs, and projects. Evaluation is one component of results-based management.

Methodology: a set of qualitative and quantitative research methods used in an evaluation.

Working definitions related to the data and evidence

Validity: (working definition) agreement between the values provided by the measurements of results and the true values

Reliability: (working definition) reproducibility of the measurement.

General definitions and Minnesota-specific definitions

Library: Included are school media centers, public libraries, academic libraries, special libraries, regional public library systems, learning resources centers, extension services, information and referral services, archives, and similar repositories.

Library System: A *regional public library system* is a multi-county public library service agency that provides free access to all residents of the region without discrimination. In Minnesota there are six consolidated and six federated systems. A consolidated system is organized with one centralized administrative unit (and board) for libraries in that region. Federated regional systems were organized where local public libraries already existed and were designed to maintain control over local funds. Each participating library in a federated library system maintains local financial and administrative autonomy. A *multicounty, multitype library system* is a cooperative network composed of any combination of public libraries, regional public library systems, public school libraries, public or private college or university libraries, state government libraries, special libraries and any other libraries which share services and resources within multi-county areas.

Minitex: Located at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities Campus, Andersen Library, Minitex provides for resource-sharing (including back-up referencing) throughout the state and through inter-agency agreements with the state library agency.

MnLINK: MnLINK, now part of Minitex, is the statewide library information system and network. MnLINK consists of two main components. The first component is an integrated library automation system shared by many colleges, universities and state government libraries. The second component is a Z39.50 compliant Gateway linking designated public and academic integrated library automation systems around

the state. The MnLINK integrated library systems and the MnLINK Gateway together create one of the largest multi-type shared library systems in the country.

Resource Sharing: Currently, resources are shared throughout the state through three systems. The first system encourages the sharing of resources between libraries with a regional library system. The second system operates through the multicounty, multitype library cooperatives that share resources within their regions. The third and largest component of resource sharing is Minitex.

2. People contacted

Birnbaum, Matthew	Institute of Museum and Library Services	mbirnbaum@imls.gov
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Wroblewski, James	MN Dept of Education, Library Services	jym.wroblewski@state.mn.us
Zelenka, Dayle	Traverse des Sioux Library System	dzelen@tds.lib.mn.us

3. Documents reviewed

Instructions and background documentation

IMLS Guidelines for Five-Year Evaluation, with attachment
Minnesota LSTA 5-Year Plan 2008-2102

Numerous documents and online resources from the IMLS and other sources regarding outcomes-based evaluation

Project related documentation

	<u>Application</u>	<u>Final or mid-year report</u>	<u>Survey instrument</u>	<u>Survey data</u>	<u>Usage/ attendance data</u>	<u>Other data/information</u>
Goal 1A Projects						
Anoka County Technical College Library <i>Audiovisuals for Student Success</i> 2011	•	•				
Great Rivers Regional Libraries <i>Laptops for Seniors</i> 2008	•	•	•	•		
Hennepin County Library <i>New Immigrants</i> 2010	•	•	•	•	•	Assessment Findings Blue Scarf Consulting August 2011
MELSA <i>Brain Fitness Project</i> 2010	•	•	•	•	•	
Ramsey County Law Library <i>At the Crossroads: Public Libraries and Web-Based Legal Forms</i> 2009	•	•	•	•		
Saint Paul Public Library <i>My Life My Library</i> 2008	•	•	•	•	•	Evaluation (My Place at the Library) Tim Cytron-Hysom, MA LSW October 2009
Goal 1B Projects						
Anoka County Library <i>Collaboration for Jobs</i> 2011	•	•	•	•	•	
Carver County <i>Library Services to the Underserved via Kiosks</i> 2009	•	•	•	•	•	
Dakota County Law Library <i>Minnesota Legal Resources</i> 2008	•	•			•	
Debra Fish Library <i>Early Childhood Resources</i> 2010	•	•	•			
East Regional Central Library <i>Digital Immigrants I</i> 2008	•	•	•	•		
East Regional Central Library <i>Digital Immigrants II</i> 2011	•	•	•	•		
Friends of the Saint Paul Public Libraries <i>Assessing Competency in Northstar Digital Literacy Standards</i> 2011	•	•				Data from assessment modules pilot (Author not identified)
Hennepin County Library <i>Resources for Ex-Offenders and their Families</i> 2010	•	•	•	•	•	
Goal 1C Projects						
East Central Regional Library <i>Teens 2B Seen</i> 2008	•	•	•		•	
MELSA <i>Family Read</i> 2008	•	•	•	•	•	
Robbinsdale-Cooper High School <i>Ready for College</i> 2009	•	•			•	
Saint Paul Public Library <i>Feed Your Mind</i> 2008	•	•			•	
St. Paul Public Schools Washington Tech Magnet <i>North End Audio Book Buds</i> 2008	•	•			•	
St. Paul Public Schools Phalen Lake Hmong Studies Magnet School <i>Honoring Our Stories</i> 2009	•	•			•	
Southeast Libraries Cooperating <i>Serving Teens and Tweens</i> 2009	•	•			•	

	<u>Application</u>	<u>Final or mid-year report</u>	<u>Survey instrument</u>	<u>Survey data</u>	<u>Usage/ attendance data</u>	<u>Other data/information</u>
<u>Goal 2A Projects</u>						
Hennepin County Library <i>Video Service Plan</i> 2011	•	•				
Lake Agazzi Regional Library <i>Laptops for Link Sites</i> 2008	•	•			•	
Minnesota Historical Society <i>Access to Minnesota Newspaper Holdings</i> 2008	•	•			•	
Pioneerland Library System Ortonville Branch <i>Shaping the 21st Century Rural Library</i> 2009	•	•	•	•		
Plum Creek Library System <i>Koha open Source ILS Implementation</i> 2011	•	•				
Southeast Library System <i>Community Libraries Online Partners</i> 2008	•	•			•	
Southeast Library System <i>Community Libraries Online Partners</i> 2010	•	•	•	•	•	
Southeast Library System <i>Community Schools Media Centers Partners</i> 2010	•	•	•	•		
Traverse de Sioux Library <i>E-Book and E-Reader Training</i> 2011	•	•	•	•		
Traverse de Sioux Library <i>Website Makeover</i> 2008	•	•				
Viking Library System <i>Mobile Laptop Training Lab</i> 2011	•	•				
Washington County Law Library <i>Librarians Lending a Hand</i> 2010	•	•	•	•	•	
<u>Goal 2B Projects</u>						
Minitex Library Information Network <i>Statewide Interlibrary Loan and Delivery</i> 2008	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minitex Library Information Network <i>Statewide Interlibrary Loan and Delivery</i> 2009	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minitex Library Information Network <i>Statewide Interlibrary Loan and Delivery</i> 2010	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minitex Library Information Network <i>Statewide Interlibrary Loan and Delivery</i> 2011	•					Collected end-user comments
Minitex Library Information Network <i>Reference and Training</i> 2008	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minitex Library Information Network <i>Reference and Training</i> 2009	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minitex Library Information Network <i>Reference and Training</i> 2010	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minitex Library Information Network <i>Reference and Training</i> 2011	•					Collected end-user comments
Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library <i>Marketing and Public Services</i> 2008	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library <i>Marketing and Public Services</i> 2009	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library <i>Marketing and Public Services</i> 2010	•	•				Collected end-user comments
Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library <i>Marketing and Public Services</i> 2011	•					Collected end-user comments

4. Research instruments

The evaluators gathered information from the SLAA initially. Based on a review of that information and conversations with the LSTA Coordinator and the State Librarian, we used in-person and phone conversations as well as email to gather information from stakeholders for the evaluation. Interview questions and other inquiries were directed toward obtaining the information and data required for the evaluation, and were tailored to each project based on the information available at the start of the review. We did not use focus groups. The SLAA plans to engage stakeholders in the near future to communicate the evaluation results. Available quantitative data was not of the type or quantity that made it amenable to more than simple analysis and reformatting to improve understanding or readability.

5. Financial summary

	<u>FY 2008</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>FY 2009</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>FY 2010</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>FY 2011</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Goal 1A	\$71,114	2.6%	\$34,900	1.2%	\$134,350	4.6%	\$35,000	1.3%
Goal 1B	68,900	2.5%	140,000	4.7%	99,980	3.4%	200,730	7.2%
Goal 1C	151,794	5.4%	157,956	5.3%	--	--	--	--
Goal 2A	<u>332,566</u>	11.9%	<u>48,519</u>	1.6%	<u>111,366</u>	3.8%	<u>191,265</u>	6.9%
Subtotals	\$623,483	22.3%	\$381,375	12.8%	\$345,696	11.8%	\$426,995	15.3%
Goal 2B	<u>1,268,450</u>	45.4%	<u>1,611,816</u>	54.0%	<u>1,748,330</u>	59.7%	<u>1,591,300</u>	57.0%
Totals	<u>\$1,891,933</u>	67.7%	<u>\$1,993,191</u>	66.8%	<u>\$2,094,026</u>	71.5%	<u>\$2,018,295</u>	72.3%

Goal 1A: Target Programming to Underserved Populations: Provide underserved populations with targeted library services that improve and enhance their quality of life and reduce barriers to library services and programs.

Goal 1B: Target Barrier Free Programming for Individuals: Provide targeted library services and programs to underserved individuals who are inhibited from accessing their local and/or regional library due to geographic, socio-economic and technology barriers.

Goal 1C: Target Programming to Children (0-17): Provide children ages 0-17 with targeted library services that improve and enhance their quality of life, reduce barriers, and improve reading skills and information literacy of children ages 0-17 to include, but not limited to, children living in poverty.

GOAL 2A: Technology and Infrastructure. Support technology and infrastructure initiatives and services that build the capacity of Minnesota's libraries to serve their patrons.

GOAL 2B: Statewide Initiatives. Support statewide initiatives and services that build the capacity of Minnesota's libraries and their staff to serve their communities. (Minitex-ILL/Delivery & Backup Reference/ELM Training and MBTBL)

Endnotes

¹ Grants not in scope included LSTA Administration and Coordination Grant, Minnesota Digital Library Maintenance and Development, Minnesota Book Awards, Proquest Digital Project License, Return on Investment Study (Arrowhead Library System), School and Public Library Statistics, State Library Development Program, and WebJunction Minnesota.

² **1A**

Needs statement

Services for the Underserved: To improve the lives of underserved populations to include, but not limited to, senior citizens, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals with disabilities and children (birth-17) living in poverty, and statewide residents of all ages unable to access library programs and services due to barriers including, but not limited to, geographic, technology and socio-economic separations, by providing them with access to global information resources and high-quality library programs and services that will fulfill their individual needs.

LSTA Purposes: (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 federal Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 9902(2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved.

State Plan Goal 1A – Target Programming to Underserved Populations: Provide underserved populations with targeted library services that improve and enhance their quality of life and reduce barriers to library services and programs.

(Minnesota has a large population of underserved citizens including but not limited to seniors and new immigrants,² individuals with disabilities² and minority populations.²)

³ **1B**

Needs statement

A number of Minnesota residents from all economic spheres lack direct access to their local library due to natural and man-made barriers. Geographic conditions including lakes, rivers and terrain can hinder reasonable direct access to a library. Man-made elements and structures including roads, buildings, policies and procedures, and telecommunication access points often bar easy and quick access to library services and programs. Technology infrastructure and telecommunication services can reduce and even bar direct access to information services and programs held at the library.

LSTA Purposes: (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 federal Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 9902(2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved.

State Plan Goal 1B – Target Barrier Free Programming for Individuals: Provide targeted library services and programs to underserved individuals who are inhibited from accessing their local and/or regional library due to geographic, socio-economic and technology barriers.

⁴ **1C**

Needs statement

Libraries across Minnesota are faced with the enormous challenge of meeting the diverse needs of children due to increased pressure from revised state and federal educational mandates, information and technology literacy standards and basic reading skills. Children from all economic backgrounds need assistance to achieve their full potential as literate and technologically savvy individuals. Lower income children predominantly live in inner cities and rural communities and generally score lower on standardized test scores. They are much less likely to have easy access to learning materials and technology than their upper-income peers. Struggling to make ends meet, many parents with low incomes are unable to purchase reading materials for their children. In many cases these parents themselves lack reading skills and cannot easily read to their children or instill in their children a love of reading. Yet, reading well and enjoying reading has been proven to be instrumental in achieving academic success and graduating from high school.

LSTA Purposes: (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 9902(2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved.

State Plan Goal 1C – Target Programming to Children (0-17). Provide children ages 0-17 with targeted library services that improve and enhance their quality of life, and improve reading skills and information literacy of children ages 0-17 to include, but not be limited to, children living in poverty.

⁵ **2A**

Needs statement

Library patrons in Minnesota highly value the ability to access resources from other libraries and library services. To fill this need, Minnesota has been diligently working to facilitate resource sharing among libraries and reduce the cost of providing access to information for its residents. However, not all library users are being served adequately. The Minnesota library community continues to seek improvements with electronic resource sharing, electronic catalog collections and other infrastructure concerns. In addition, libraries struggle to offer widespread public access to technology and technology training to meet the needs of all their communities.

LSTA Purposes. (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.

State Plan Goal 2A – Technology and infrastructure. Support technology and infrastructure initiatives and services that build the capacity of Minnesota’s libraries to serve their patrons.

⁶ **2B**

Needs statement

Capacity Building – to improve the opportunity for Minnesotans to access quality information resources wherever, whenever, and however they need them. State Library Services, a division of the Minnesota Department of Education, works with the Minnesota library community to facilitate resource sharing among libraries and reduce the cost of providing access to information for its customers. Library customers in Minnesota highly value the ability to order books and utilize library resources and services. However, not all library users are being served adequately. Minnesota’s library

community continues to struggle with document delivery, electronic resource sharing, statewide database licensing, and other infrastructure concerns. In addition, libraries struggle to offer widespread public access to technology and technology training that meets the needs of their communities. Another concern in Minnesota is the need for well-trained library staff and trustees to provide quality library services and assume library leadership roles throughout the state. Overall, about 34 percent of the staff in Minnesota libraries is expected to retire within the next five years. Libraries of all types are reporting difficulty in filling open positions with qualified people, and in keeping those who do take the positions in their jobs long enough to be adequately trained. There is a critical need for consistent and ongoing efforts to replace departing library personnel in all types of libraries. In addition, librarians are expected to fill a wide range of roles, including fund- raising, technology support, research, marketing and advocacy. Training in areas such as these is vital to the successful implementation of quality library programs and services.

LSTA Purposes: (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.

State Plan Goal 2B – Support statewide initiatives and services that build the capacity of Minnesota’s libraries and their staff to serve their communities. Also encompasses State Plan Goal 1A – Target Programming to Underserved Populations. (Traditional output measurement of services will be utilized including number and type of funding sources identified, state assessment demographics, number and type of workshops conducted, number of individuals trained, etc.)

⁷ The Library of Congress’ National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) administers a free national library program for visually and physically disabled persons who cannot read standard print library materials. NLS selects and produces full-length books and magazines in audio and in braille for distribution through a network of designated libraries nationwide.

⁸ The Minnesota State Services for the Blind (SSB) provides services to blind and visually impaired persons. Specifically, the SSB inventories, distributes, and repairs specialized playback equipment provided by the NLS and loaned to Library (Braille and Talking Book Library) customers throughout the state.

⁹ The Library provides extensive, mainly quantitative, annual reports to the NLS, and is responsible for meeting the NLS standards set out in the *Revised Standards and Guidelines of Services for the Library of Congress Network of Libraries for the Blind and Visually Handicapped*.

¹⁰ Institutions include: libraries (not sub-regional), schools for the blind and physically disabled, public and private schools (elementary and secondary only), hospitals, nursing and convalescent homes, and nonprofits and group homes.

¹¹ “I don’t think I can find words strong enough to tell you how much your services has meant to my mother for all of her life. Mom was a keenly intelligent woman . . . and never lost her thirst for learning.” (Family member 2009) “Your knowledge of the books and what I have received over the past four years has provided me with a great amount of pleasure in reading.” (Library patron 2009)

¹² “Right up to a few days before she died, she was busy reading her braille books and sharing her knowledge with others.” (Family member 2009) “I don’t know what I would do without these books.” (Type of patron comment heard regularly by staff) “My mom receives the talking books she requests

overnight. She would be lost without this wonderful service. Many folks cannot imagine the depth of loss when one who was an ardent reader can no longer see. These talking books fill many a long day with enjoyment and help keep my mom connected to reality, as it is part of her routine. Thanks a million times over.” (Family member 2009)

¹³ “The library service introduces [students] to books that they would not otherwise think to read. The students also state that they appreciate suggestions given to them by the librarians and that they have discovered some great titles through that means.” (Minnesota State Academy for the Blind teacher 2011) “Braille books from the library collection enhance our braille literacy program for all ages and ability levels. This enables us to meet individual needs and interest levels of each student. The library also has proven an invaluable resource for studying summer school themes. One student said that using audio books from the library helped him to maintain pace with his peers.” (Minnesota State Academy for the Blind teacher 2011)

¹⁴ The open request system needed new parameters built into the software. As a result of the changes, the system now automatically rejects requests based on parameters that local libraries established – for example, limits on the number of active requests that a single user can have at one time, or limits based on the publication date and cost of materials being requested. The net effect of the new parameters has been to reduce overall request volume on the system in these years.

¹⁵ “Courtesy returns” means that a library item is returned to any library and Minitex delivers it to the owning library. Thus, patrons don’t have to return items to the place where they received the items.

¹⁶ A 2003 study for Minitex noted limitations of outcome based evaluation as it would be applied to interlibrary loan and delivery services: (1) It is generally difficult to establish a direct causal relationship between activities and their outcomes. Enabling access to and providing delivery of library items does not directly establish end-user benefits. (2) Minitex has shared responsibility to produce outcomes. Its services are a partnership with local libraries and regional or multi-type library systems. The end-user sees the result but not necessarily all of the partners. (3) Some outcomes, like long-term learning enhancement can't reasonably be measured with available tools and resources. The study noted also that cost, efficiency, and customer satisfaction are useful and measurable, although the customer may be libraries in addition to users.

¹⁷ “To have my request for a book on Rochester Public Library’s shelves show up at the Fergus Falls [library] desk two days after I have asked for it . . . is just plain magic. Although out here on the edge of the prairie, we understand technology’s capabilities, we remain impressed by the actual delivery.” (retired public library director)

¹⁸ From sample comments at one meeting: “Very helpful. It’s great meeting with front line ILL staff and sharing information.” “Today’s program was really good. I found all the information given was done in a very good and interesting way.” “It was nice to hear from other library systems’ ways of doing procedures to get ideas and suggestions.”

¹⁹ “I am a part-time professor who teaches online. I find MnLINK to be easier to search and use than ILL systems I’ve used on various university and college campuses. I am extremely impressed by and grateful for the service, as it would be much more difficult for me to conduct research and remain current in my field without it. I also use the service to obtain books and videos for my pre-school age daughter.” “I started graduate studies at the College of St. Scholastica in the summer of 2011. Due to a delay in obtaining funding, I had extremely limited funds, and was unable to purchase most of the books required for my classes. I was able to find most of the remaining textbooks and borrow them through MnLINK, and thus was able to participate in the first weeks of class until my funding was available.”

²⁰ “For over 50 years, I have been looking for a book published in London in 1808 by my Grandfather.

I have even been to the British National Library to see a copy, but they told me it was destroyed in WWII. As a librarian myself, I tried everywhere to find a copy. I submitted a MnLINK request for the book on Monday, and by Thursday I had it in the mail. What an unbelievable service!” “I am able to obtain materials that are out of print and/or not available from any other source.”

²¹ “It has been a great help to my open-source web mapping project to have state wide access to available technical materials via the web. Saved me a bundle!” “In this era of doing more with less and getting the most out of our resources, the MnLINK program makes sense and really works well.”

²² “Through my own research I could not find adequate materials to support my fundraising efforts for an organization that provides [medical care] for the poor. [The reference librarian] provided a four page document including links that supplied exactly what I needed. I was also so impressed with how well the report was organized and written. . . . on behalf of [organization name] and myself, we are very grateful for this wonderful reference service that Minitex provides.” (Nov. 2010) “You were all so gracious and kind as I poured out to you my unsuccessful attempts to find answers to the patrons’ questions in-house. I always knew I and my patrons were in good hands when it came to contacting Minitex reference.” (public librarian, June 2011)

²³ “Thank you for the fantastic presentations you provided for Barnum students and UMD students. The teachers at Barnum are excited to use the resources you presented and my students at UMD thought the databases would be valuable as they create lessons. I will definitely be calling on you for a similar presentation next year.” (Nov. 2011) “Thanks so much for coming out to Chaska schools to train us on using ELM in a better way. Everyone was so glad they got a chance to participate. I got a chance to show our 6th graders how to use ELM last week and they had a blast with it.” (teacher)

²⁴ “Being from a small institution of higher education with a shoestring budget in an economically disadvantaged area, I am always thrilled to inform new students and instructors about our access to high quality, reputable, substantial academic journal articles and other electronic database resources . . . ELM. ELM is absolutely essential for our students and faculty members, and our humble library couldn’t give them this incredible tool on our own. This use of LSTA funds is dissolving the digital divide.” (Cass Lake MN)

²⁵ “As a new employee at a small public library, this presentation helped me to become aware of resources that are available outside our library. I think this knowledge could greatly assist many of the students that come in looking for information for a school assignment – especially being a smaller library with fewer resources. I found the presentation very beneficial.” (2008) “Your presentation ignited a new interest in me personally, to use more of the databases, so that I may use them with students and teachers.” (media specialist) “Just a note to thank you for the fine work you do to produce Reference Notes. I am not even library employed, but I read your Notes with care. . . . You do a great job and it is appreciated on the fringes of the library world.” (Feb. 2011)

²⁶ “I have used ELM in a variety of ways: (1) as a college librarian, I instruct users in ways to use the databases to complete assignments; (2) as an educator, I use articles within the ELM databases to supplement my instruction; (3) as a Minnesotan, I have used ELM databases to conduct research from home about purchasing a new vehicle. These tools are invaluable and having the statewide license is an incredible savings to the state.”