

An Independent Evaluation:
Implementation of a Technology Plan for Public Libraries

in the
United States Virgin Islands

under the
Institute for Museum and Library Services
Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States Program
FY 2008 – 2012



Evaluator

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A Report to
Government of the Virgin Islands
Department of Planning and Natural Resources
Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums

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EVALUATION SUMMARY

Territorial Library Agency - Background

The Executive Branch of the Government of the Virgin Islands includes the Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR). Administration of the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant funding in the U.S. Virgin Islands is the responsibility of the Territorial Library Agency, a division of DPNR known as the Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums (DLAM).

Territory-wide, no distinction is made between local and state (territorial) administration of public library functions. DLAM oversees the direct provision of public library service, and is responsible for the administrative, centralized technical, online services and systems functions.

In addition to four major public libraries located on three main islands, DLAM also operates two bookmobiles (one on St. Thomas and one on St. Croix), and the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (the “Regional Library”) on St. Croix. DLAM maintains the Territorial Archives, including special collections of Virgin Islands materials, on St. Thomas and on St. Croix, and an imaging lab in St. Thomas where digital images are captured from microfilm, paper and born-digital formats. DLAM also oversees the physical preservation and maintenance, and museum management and operation, of two historic fortresses: Fort Frederick on St. Croix and Fort Christian on St. Thomas.

It is the declared mission of DLAM to:

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

In 2007, DPNR/DLAM prepared “A Five-Year Technology Plan for Public Libraries in the United States Virgin Islands, 2008-2012”¹ (the “Plan”) for consideration by IMLS for funding under the LSTA Program. According to the Plan, DLAM’s objectives seek to fulfill its organizational mission and thereby:

¹ Viewed online as of September 2, 2012 at <http://www.imls.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/VIplan2012.pdf> . A copy of the Plan is attached as Appendix B.

- improve the ability of Virgin Islands libraries to provide public service;
- enhance DLAM’s document storage capacities;
- further develop DLAM’s public service capacity; and
- expand DLAM’s technological base.

On the basis of the Plan, IMLS subsequently awarded the following LSTA funds to DPNR/DLAM for the five-year period of 2008-2012:

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| 2008 | \$87,268 |
| 2009 | \$108,687 |
| 2010 | \$109,714 |
| 2011 | \$104,027 ² |
| 2012 | \$100,971 |
| Total Award | \$510,667 |

This report will evaluate the implementation of the Plan, especially the achievement of the objectives detailed therein.

Evaluator’s Background and Qualifications

Nancy Christie (the “Evaluator”) is an Independent Education Consultant in the Virgin Islands, with over 30 years of leadership in library media services coordination and librarianship in the Territory.³ The Evaluator’s past experience has been fortuitously aligned with and complementary to DLAM’s LSTA objectives for its public library systems during 2008-2012.

Prior to preparing the Plan for 2008-2012, DLAM had forged a pledge for technology partnership and set common goals with the Virgin Islands Department of Education (“DOE”) and the University of the Virgin Islands (“UVI”) to merge disparate public library and school library asset management systems into a unified information systems platform designed by SirsiDynix. The collaborative effort was expected to yield and maximize the advantages of data and information sharing between the library and technology services not only for all three entities but also for the majority of Virgin Islands library users.

Although DOE followed through on its decision to utilize the same library asset management system as DLAM, it eventually made a strategic decision to develop and manage the DOE automated library system as a separate and discrete network. The benefits of an integrated and collaborative effort between DOE library services and DLAM was lost as a result. However, because the Evaluator was in a library leadership position at DOE when these unanticipated

² Does not include a 2011 award by IMLS in the amount of \$30,000 to DPNR/DLAM under the LSTA Competitive Grants to Territories and Freely Associated States program.

³ Resumé of Evaluator Nancy Christie is attached as Appendix C.

developments unfolded, she is very familiar with the circumstances surrounding some of DLAM's less successful LSTA objectives and is uniquely qualified to comment.

During her long and distinguished career at DOE, particularly while serving as the Coordinator for Media Library Services for the DOE St. Thomas/St. John School District from 2000 to 2011, the Evaluator often was responsible for coordinating on behalf of DOE key aspects of the shared objectives originally contemplated under the Plan. However, the Evaluator hereby affirmatively states that as of 2011, she is no longer employed by DOE. During 2012 she has served as an Independent Consultant for professional development initiatives in DOE, but in this capacity the Evaluator no longer has a direct role in carrying out any LSTA-funded activities relating to DLAM. The Evaluator affirms that her role as Evaluator is completely independent of DLAM, or any persons or entities who might be favorably or adversely affected by the evaluation results. It is precisely the synchronicity of her professional practice and familiarity with DLAM's public library information systems that makes the Evaluator especially well-suited for the task of making an informed assessment of objectives identified under the Plan.

Above all, the Evaluator embraces the "Guiding Principles for Evaluators" – systematic inquiry, competence, integrity/honesty, respect for people, and responsibilities for general and public welfare – adopted and promulgated by the American Evaluation Association.⁴

Major Questions

Recognizing an integrated pursuit of program goals and activities to be the desired end result for DLAM's objectives under the Plan, the Evaluator utilized the questions promulgated as LSTA Grants to States Priorities 1 through 6⁵ in preparing this evaluation:

LSTA Grants to States Priority 1

Did services for learning and access to information and educational resources expand for individuals of all ages?

LSTA Grants to States Priority 2

Have library services been developed that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national and international electronic networks?

LSTA Grants to States Priority 3

Have electronic and other linkages been provided among and between all types of libraries?

⁴ "Guiding Principles for Evaluators," American Evaluation Association viewed online on September 2, 2012 at <http://www.eval.org/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesPrintable.asp>.

⁵ 20 U.S.C. §9141(a) "Grants to States" provisions viewed online September 2, 2012 at <http://us-code.vlex.com/vid/sec-grants-states-19196744>. "In general of the funds provided to a State library administrative agency under section 9123 of this title, such agency shall expend, either directly or through subgrants or cooperative agreements, at least 96 percent of such funds for - . . ." the purposes enumerated.

LSTA Grants to States Priority 4

What public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations developed?

LSTA Grants to States Priority 5

How were library services targeted to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills?

LSTA Grants to States Priority 6

How have library and information services been targeted to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families with incomes below the poverty line?

Primary Findings

The evaluator determined that a high level of synchronization existed between DLAM's mission priorities, LSTA's grant objectives and program goals proposed in the 2008 – 2012 Virgin Islands Technology Plan. The following table illustrates the relationships between those expressions.

| DLAM's Mission Priorities | LSTA Grant to States Priorities | V.I. 2008-2012 Program Goals |
|--|---|--|
| Provide service, information and other resources to the Government of the United States Virgin Islands | (2) Promote continuous improvement in library services in all types of libraries in order to better serve the people of the United States (3) Facilitate access to resources in all types of libraries for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry | Expand the scope of the Virgin Islands Automated Library System (VIALS) to include collaboration with the (VILINET) Virgin Islands Library Network |

| DLAM's Mission Priorities | LSTA Grant to States Priorities | V.I. 2008-2012 Program Goals |
|--|---|--|
| Support the development of an informed citizenry by providing access to a world of ideas and information | <p>(4) Encourage resource-sharing among all types of libraries for the purpose of achieving economical and efficient delivery of library services to the public</p> <p>(5) Promote library services that provide users with access to information through national, state, local, regional, and international collaborations and networks</p> | <p>Increase participation in library-shared online resources and cataloging services in collaboration with VILINET (territorial academic, school, special libraries), including shared bibliographic databases and OCLC services</p> <p>Improve telecommunication connectivity and network technology related to VIALS by taking advantage of the subsidized funding offered by the E-Rate program</p> |
| Identify, preserve and promote the historical and public records of the United States Virgin Islands | (5) Promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning and enhance and expand the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources relating to workforce development, 21st century skills, and digital literacy | Increase the volume and quality of online library/information resources including those from commercial, government (federal, state, local) sources by establishing an improved means for identification, evaluation, acquisition of electronic assets |
| Provide support to all residents of the United States Virgin Islands in their pursuit of learning | <p>(3) Facilitate access to resources in all types of libraries for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry</p> <p>(1, 5) Enhance the role of libraries within the information infrastructure of the United States in order to support research, education, and innovation</p> | Advocate for the reinstitution of the library advisory councils, as stipulated in the Virgin Islands Code, for the purpose of improving the standards for library service in the territory. |

Other Key Findings

While all of the aspirations proposed in the Plan are worthwhile and desirable, some of the goals have proven to be overly ambitious or excessively broad, principally due to factors or exacerbated by global economic downturns experienced in 2008-2012.

The scarcity of adequate local funds available for matched or leveraged infusion to the targeted programs, has made it difficult to satisfy such a wide spectrum of activities, even with the LSTA grant awards funded.

In addition, the economic decline has resulted in many other agencies and entities cutting back programs and services, further curtailing what otherwise may have been possible avenues of collaboration for DLAM.

The period of time covered by the evaluation of DLAM's system implementations under the 2008 – 2012 LSTA Grants to States program delineates what arguably has been the most volatile period in the history of libraries in the United States.

The sharp economic decline which was combined with rapid technological advances and exceptionally high patron service demands presented all state library administrative agencies (SLAAs) with a daunting challenge to achieve progress with varied efforts in library service. Increasing unemployment and cuts to social service agencies simultaneously drove record numbers of people into libraries seeking everything from job searches online to a cozy environment to read, learn and grow.

By the time this evaluation was conducted in 2012, the Virgin Islands public library system was experiencing a greater than 35% reduction in staff. The loss of 17 of 48 public library staff over the five-year grant period due to retirements and resignations proved to be both obstructive and debilitating for accomplishing Plan goals. Its effects were widespread and keenly felt throughout DLAM. Although DPNR attempted to fill some staff vacancies with intra-departmental transfers, by January 2012 even transferred personnel had subsequently resigned or retired.

Currently on St. Croix, two of three libraries are operating without professional librarians. There are also vacancies for library technicians, a help desk technician and library associates. On the island of St. Thomas, additional personnel are needed to staff the nearly completed Charles Wesley Turnbull Regional Library (TRG). Specifically these positions include additional professional librarians, library technicians and other personnel positions left vacant by former staff who retired or resigned.

Library closures for all locations have resulted for Saturdays and DLAM is unable to extend library services beyond regular business hours during the week. This is a disservice to the community, especially for students and other patrons who need to use public libraries resources on Saturdays and those who would utilize the library after 5:00 P.M. during the week.

In spite of DLAM's diminished capacity to serve the public, much has been accomplished and lessons learned to improve future grant and program evaluation efforts. As this evaluation documents, DLAM has made progress toward achieving most of the objectives that were

outlined in its 2008 – 2012 LSTA Plan, in spite of the surrounding difficult economic circumstances.

Recommendations

1. Develop a strategic plan for library services and technology functions within DLAM with input from staff, patrons and other stakeholders. The plan should be specific and tasks should be assigned, acknowledged and monitored. The strategic plan should cover the five-year period of the LSTA Grants to States interval and should be reviewed no less than annually to incorporate and account for organizational or environmental changes which may occur.
2. Identify and develop grant proposals most likely to target a realistic objective of one or perhaps two targeted program activities. Each activity should be described in detail, thus encouraging forethought, planning and the structuring of measurable outcomes.
3. Develop a marketable information services plan that engages and keeps new community partners with interests common to DLAM informed. Identify and work with partners who may be willing to commit funding that will assist in the realization of those common goals.
4. Develop a strategic plan to convince managing stakeholders that institutional interests are well-served by a more robust underwriting of the informational technology capacity of the Territorial public library system within DLAM.
5. Identify and develop measurable outcomes within DLAM in order to better capture and report the efficiencies and needs of service and information delivery. Implement monitoring, collection and periodic analysis of data on a routinized basis. Use the information collected to assist in policy development, strategic planning and to improve operations.
6. Continue to negotiate for subscriptions databases and other digital content for the DLAM public libraries; consider expanding the list of available databases.
7. Continue support for Regional Library services and programs . DLAM should increase the profile of and promote this asset during the next five years with the goal of building enrollment and extending patron services. Explore alternate delivery systems (e.g., e-readers).
8. DLAM cannot afford to suffer any further cuts and reductions in its personnel budget if it is to provide adequate library service to the people of the Virgin Islands. Vacancies must be filled with qualified and trained staff in order to provide adequate library services throughout the Territory.

EVALUATION

Use of the Evaluation Product

This report is intended for use by the following audiences:

1. IMLS requires this evaluation as part of the grant program reporting requirements for LSTA funding awarded to DLAM for 2008-2012. Section 9134 of IMLS's authorizing legislation directs SLAAs to "independently evaluate, and report to the [IMLS] Director regarding the activities assisted under this subchapter, prior to the end of the 5-year plan."⁶
2. DPNR/DLAM has requested the evaluation, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for receiving LSTA funding from IMLS.
3. Territorial public library staff, as well as partners and vendors involved in designing, implementing, and assessing LSTA-supported goals under the Plan.
4. Territorial policy makers and elected/appointed government officials.

Issues Addressed

The evaluation's overarching question is: "Did the activities undertaken through the state's LSTA plan achieve results related to priorities identified in the Act?"

A summary of Plan objectives follows, with encapsulated findings for each objective attempting to identify those issues and challenges that impeded and negatively impacted full implementation.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Plan Goal #1: | To expand the scope of VIALS to include collaboration with VILINET |
| Findings: | <p>The three primary institutions in the VILINET cooperative (DLAM, DOE and UVI) disbanded a previous initiative to jointly fund the upgrade of integrated library system ("ILS") software package due to a myriad of administrative and technical issues.</p> <p>Each agency independently financed essentially the same product due to funding conflicts and other internal administrative issues.</p> <p>In turn, this led to the dismantling of the original partners of VILINET and resulted in their lack of impetus to seek out future collaborative projects and joint ventures with each other.</p> |

⁶ "Guidelines for Five-Year Evaluation," Institute for Museum and Library Services, viewed online September 2, 2012 at http://www.imls.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/2008-2012_Five-Year_Evaluation_Guidance_SLAA.pdf.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Plan Goal #2: | To increase participation in library shared online resources and cataloging services in collaboration with VILINET (territorial academic, school, special libraries), including shared bibliographic databases and the OCLC services. |
| Finding: | The issue addressed in Plan Goal #1 above is a major contributing factor to DLAM's inability to successfully collaborate on this activity. |
| Plan Goal #3 | To improve the telecommunication connectivity and network technology related to VIALS by taking advantage of the subsidized funding offered by the E-Rate program. These improvements will target telecommunications services, Internet access, internal connections, and basic maintenance of internet connections. |
| Finding: | The anticipated relocation to a state-of-the-art, newly designed and constructed, 28,000 sq. ft. library facility which would serve as the nucleus point for public libraries in the Territory did not come to fruition in the timeframe previously outlined due to multiple change-orders and construction delays. The prepared and submitted E-Rate application form was approved by the former Commissioner of the Department of Planning and Natural Resources for submission. However, at this time the status of this initiative remains uncertain. |
| Plan Goal #4 | To increase the volume and quality of online library/information resources including those from commercial, government (federal, state, local) by establishing an improved means for identification, evaluation, acquisition of electronic resources. |
| Finding: | DLAM has been able to increase its online database resources to its client base through judicious use of grant funding for commercial offerings and wise selections of available public domain choices. The sharing dynamic from VILINET partner institutions has not been a viable service available to DLAM patrons due to the issue detailed in item #1 above. |
| Plan Goal #5 | To advocate for the restitution and reappointment of the Library Advisory Councils, in accordance with the statutory provisions of the Virgin Islands Code, for the purpose of improving the standards for library service in the territory. |
| Finding: | It is unclear what has inhibited DLAM from pursuing access to this valuable advisory and advocacy community resource. |

Value of the Evaluation Process

Evaluator adhered to the principles of neutrality, thoroughness, and confidentiality throughout the evaluation process. Evaluator exercised every reasonable effort to remain neutral during each stage of evaluation activities and analysis. Evaluator reminded contactors and those interviewed that she is not affiliated with DLAM, IMLS, or any other interested party. Evaluator conducted all solicitations for information in confidence and reminded participants that the evaluation would not contain any personally identifiable information.

DESCRIPTION OF THE METHODOLOGY EMPLOYED

Process

Consultant employed a variety of different evaluation methods to assess DLAM's progress in pursuing its goals for the LSTA Grants to States program. Contributions of data and compiled information were also received from several key staff members during evaluation interviews.⁷

The strength of the evaluation methodology derives from:

- Objective, external evaluators not associated with the state in any capacity.
- Varied approaches and tools, allowing analysis and comparison of program data collected by staff and quantitative survey results with comments from librarians and a small group of end users.
- Credible data, including output and outcomes, thanks to strong efforts by DLAM to identify outcomes as well as design, develop and implement ongoing data collection methods.

Methodological weaknesses are also present, however, and associated with external factors and forces generally outside the control of DLAM:

- Difficulty in identifying trends, with some incomplete information due to a migration from a 20 year old library system of SirsiDynix to the new SirsiDynix Symphony System in 2010.

⁷ See, Appendix D, "Persons Interviewed."

- Ex post facto evaluation design, which only allowed for review of program data after the fact, resulting in inconsistent data in some areas and sometimes unrecoverable gaps in information.

Data Sources

The research data design relied on two major sources: (a) the DLAM public library system; and (b) U.S. and Territorial sources identified for quantitative analysis. These sources, which primarily reflect outputs for various projects, included:

- Statistics from annual DPNR/DLAM Reports
- Statistics collected internally by the DLAM (e.g., number of libraries subscribing to sponsored databases, number of database searches)
- Internal library data compiled for this evaluation
- Internal databases maintained by DLAM
- Data from the U.S. Census Bureau
- LSTA Grants to States Program Reports by DLAM for the grant period

A small sample of some of the dataset points internally compiled, reviewed and considered by the Evaluator for this evaluation is provided in the following table:

| DESCRIPTION | BAA | BKT | WIL | PET | BKX | SPR | TOTAL |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-----|------------------|-------|-----|-------|---------|
| Patron library card enrollment FY2012 | 114 | 132 | 79 | 162 | | 145 | 910 |
| Total patron enrollment | | | | | | | 48,260 |
| Checkouts August 2011-June 2012 | 2,058 | 875 | 4,878 | 1,154 | 102 | 5,182 | 14,249 |
| Check-ins August 2011-June 2012 | | | | | | | 14,382 |
| Items added August 2011-June 2012 | 703 | 7 | 528 ⁸ | 115 | 53 | 685 | 3,756 |
| Cataloged items | | | | | | | 205,237 |

Program Stakeholder Involvement

Little or no stakeholder involvement, other than passive statistical data collection, was included in this evaluation. Modifications by IMLS to its LSTA Grants to the States program Evaluation

⁸ Does not include 1,615 items added to SUDOCs.

Guidelines were made effective in 2010 making quite clear the acceptable procedures and standards to be used for independent evaluation.

As noted elsewhere in this report, during the Plan's 2008-2012 grant period, DLAM witnessed major staff losses, no staff replacements, and the fall-out effects of the Government's pervasive and worsening fiscal predicament. In this atmosphere of constant jeopardy and crisis, DLAM found itself ill-equipped to timely address the revised reporting requirements for independent evaluation of its LSTA program. At the eleventh hour, the Evaluator's services were arranged and time constraints for filing demanded that the evaluation be completed as quickly as possible. Scattered and uncoordinated data had been collected, whenever possible, and the Evaluator has relied heavily on personal interviews to prepare this report.

This situation prompted the Evaluator to strongly recommend that desirable data points be identified immediately, and data collection procedures and guidelines be developed and promulgated by DLAM as soon as possible. The lack of quantitative outcomes in the next LSTA grant cycle, if funded, will be less likely to be tolerated by IMLS, and ultimately does DLAM a disservice if measurable objectives cannot be properly and optimally tracked and analyzed.

ANALYSIS OF PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

To determine the degree to which Plan objectives were accomplished, and to evaluate the effectiveness of same, the Evaluator utilized the LSTA Grants to States Priorities format. The five goals, to wit:

- Expansion of the Scope of VIALS
- Increase participation in shared online resources and cataloging services
- Improve connectivity and technology through E-Rate funding
- Increase quality and range of online offerings available to the VIALS client base
- Reinstitution of the library advisory councils drawn from community advocates

and the tasks undertaken by DLAM to achieve them, were objectively evaluated first from the point of view of the Plan, and then within the context of the broader range of services offered by DLAM.

Plan Goal 1: Expansion of the Scope of VIALS

DLAM has successfully met this goal.

The ILS that supports the management of the Virgin Islands collective bibliographic database (the VIALS catalog), including its various patron and other ancillary files, has

been significantly upgraded. This upgrade, accomplished in part with a major infusion of LSTA funding, has improved the intellectual access to all Virgin Islands public library holdings by providing new avenues for examining the attributes of those collections.

The modernized report generation capability equips librarians and other managers of VIALS with report tools that were heretofore only available through interaction with the system administrators.

Some of the other novel features that have added value to the services that are offered to VIALS users and clients include:

- Homebound outreach services
- Materials booking
- Community information database
- Interlibrary loan item management
- Offline operation capability
- Individualized toolbar configuration
- Integrated MARC record manipulation
- Flexible and hierarchical hold administration
- Integrated authority management

Plan Goal 2: Increase participation in shared online resources and cataloging services

This goal was only been partially met due to the lack of participation by DOE and UVI in the anticipated collaborative efforts to achieve shared online resources and cataloging services via a common, consolidated network.

Plan Goal 3: Improve connectivity and technology through E-Rate funding

DLAM did not meet this goal.

This goal could not be achieved due to DLAM's fiscal inability to fund the required consultant support for the application process.

Plan Goal 4: Increase quality and range of online offerings available to the VIALS client base

DLAM has successfully met this goal.

DLAM has acquired licensed search and access rights to the EBSCO MasterFILE Premier databases which include periodical, newspaper and image files. The EBSCO databases provide the VIALS patron community the ability to pursue basic research projects across a broad range of topics, including concentration regional and Caribbean subjects.

Plan Goal 5: Restitution and reappointment of the Library Advisory Council drawn from community advocates

DLAM did not meet this objective due to lack of administrative and financial support from DLAM and others.

Despite the downturn in the Virgin Islands economy and elsewhere during the grant period, access to an ever-increasing number of information resources is being provided by DLAM to the residents of the U.S Virgin Islands every year. DLAM also seeks opportunities to improve its facilities whenever it can in order to more effectively serve the needs of library patrons. With the advancement of technology, there is an ever-present need to update current library materials while steadily offering new information in new formats. DLAM recognizes there is always room for improvement in its service delivery commitment and responsibilities for the public libraries of the Virgin Islands.

To better illustrate the range and scope of library service capabilities that are made possible, enhanced and improved by efficient technology support and asset management for library resources, LSTA Grants to States Priorities below have been applied to broader DLAM system-wide activities. Many of these activities critically rely on the successful accomplishment of Plan objectives, and many attribute the sole reason for their success to the funding support given to DLAM through the LSTA Grants to States Program. Others have little or no direct relationship to LSTA funding but are included here as they may be seen to contribute to the delivery of services and achievement of objectives prioritized by LSTA.

LSTA Priority 1: Did services for learning and access to information and educational resources expand for individuals of all ages?

Several major strategies have been employed in support of this priority:

- Development of service capacity among citizens of the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Supporting life-long learning
- Library of Congress Free Surplus Books
- Participation in the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge
- DLAM Summer Reading Program
- Virgin Islands Center for the Book

- New Website Launched
- McNaughton Subscription Services
- SirsiDynix Symphony
- Bookmobiles

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS FREE SURPLUS BOOKS

In 2008, DLAM arranged for the public libraries to participate in the Library of Congress (LOC) Free Surplus Books Program. Brand new books were made available for distribution throughout the public libraries in the Territory. The titles selected and received were mostly hardbacks, and included best sellers, novels, fiction, non-fiction, children's books, Hispanic books and Caribbean titles.

LOC makes surplus books available to educational institutions (including full-time tax-supported or non-profit schools, school systems, colleges, universities, museums, and public libraries), public bodies (agencies of local, state, or national government), and non-profit tax-exempt organizations in the United States having tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1964.

GOVERNOR'S SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

The Governor's Summer Reading Challenge is an annual initiative that encourages the Territory's students to read five or more books of their choice over their summer vacations. The effort promotes reading for entertainment, personal enrichment and literacy among young Virgin Islanders. The Governor encourages students to access free e-books on DLAM's Web site at www.virginislandspubliclibraries.org and to apply these titles towards his program's five-book (www.readfive.org) goal. The Governor's Summer Reading Challenge is a partnership of the Office of the Governor, the Department of Education, DLAM's public libraries, and Learn-It Systems Corporation.

On DLAM's website, there is a link to the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge site and online tracking and applications to get a Virgin Islands public library card.

DLAM SUMMER READING PROGRAMS

DLAM, in conjunction with the Friends of the Public Libraries, commenced territory-wide DLAM Summer Reading Programs for a period of two years during this evaluation period. For example, one year, the public library summer readings programs were based on three themes:

Cultural Connection - *Children will learn about various cultures;*

Book-A-Trip Around the World - *Children will travel to many places around the world through a book; and*

Catch the Reading Bug! - *Children will be encouraged to build a love for reading.*

The Summer Reading Program involved both children and teens, with a different theme and manual for each. In 2011 this program was discontinued due to lack of staffing, funding and DLAM shifted its focus to participation in the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge.

VIRGIN ISLANDS CENTER FOR THE BOOK

LOC and the Government of the U.S. Virgin Islands announced the creation of the Virgin Islands Center for the Book (the "Center"), the first center affiliate to be located in a United States territory. The principal organizer of the Center is Ingrid Bough, Territorial Director of DLAM. The Center is based in an established public library on St. Croix but will eventually have its own building. Currently, the Athalie McFarlane Petersen Public Library in Frederiksted serves as its host institution.

The Center was established to support lifelong learning by stimulating public interest in books, reading, literacy and libraries. Early on, the Center sponsored a territory-wide "Letters about Literature," a national reading and writing program for students in grades 4 through 12 for a period of two years (see below).

The Center brings the number of nationwide affiliate Centers for the Book to 52—with one in each state and the District of Columbia. Members work with the Center for the Book through LOC, as well as independently, to promote the literary heritage of their region and the importance of reading. Representatives from affiliated centers meet annually at LOC for an "idea exchange" day, in which representatives learn what their fellow centers are doing to advance reading and literacy. LOC's Center for the Book program was created in 1977.

LSTA funds supported the awards program certificates for the Center, including student awards. The goal of this program is to support lifelong learning by stimulating public interest in books, reading, literacy and libraries.

Letters about Literature

Another program of the Center for the Book is Letters about Literature, a national reading and writing program for students in grades 4 through 12. Nationally, over 70,000 students participate in this program sponsored by the LOC and Target stores. Students write to an author and describe how the author's work changed the reader's view of the world or him/herself.

To encourage participation, the Territorial Director coordinated and promoted the program throughout the Territory and through the Office of the Governor for a period of two years (2009-2011). Local Virgin Islands students competed for awards in the program. These awards were supported with LSTA funds and were presented in an awards ceremony at one of the main libraries on the island of St. Croix with the students, their families and their teachers in attendance.

National Book Festival – Pavilion of the States

The Center also organizes the author program of the National Book Festival, which is held annually in September on the National Mall in Washington. DLAM participates annually in the National Book Festival in the Pavilion of the States as part of the U.S. Territories Pavilion.

NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED

DLAM launched a newly designed and upgraded website in 2009. The new site, www.virginislandspubliclibraries.org⁹ makes available volumes of information in a user-friendly manner, and is designed specifically for libraries. This new site makes it easy for public library users to find information and access the many online resources available. Visitor data for FY 2011 is illustrated further below.

Some site features include: library hours, contact numbers, an events calendar, a kid's zone, a teen corner and a senior's page. Biblioteca En Español is an area with impressive quantities of information for the Spanish-speaking segment of the Virgin Islands community. For researchers, links to other government divisions, the Virgin Islands Code, and Territorial Library and Archives information is also on the site. Each Virgin Islands public library also features background history about its facility. Links are also provided to many organizations that are related to the public libraries, archives and museums such as the Friends of the Library and local library associations.

Other features include a custom resource search feature that lets users search the DLAM web site, the library's online catalog, or the entire web from the top of each web page. Some areas of the website require that users have a library card for full functionality.

Importantly, the new website provides much needed access to information about the Regional Library, also known as the Talking Books Library. Patrons utilizing this library's resource pages will be able to download audiobooks from an online database.

⁹ This site is also accessible through a link at www.library.gov.vi.

FY 2011 - 10,707 people visited this site

Visits: **20,107**

Unique Visitors: **10,707**

Pageviews: **45,004**

Bounce Rate: **60.99%**

% New Visits: **52.88%**



52.90%

New Visitors

47.10%

Returning Visitors

This report was generated by Google Analytics for website www.virginislandpubliclibraries.org website 9:41 PM - [Refresh Report](#)

The most popular pages were:

- a. home page
- b. hours
- c. contact information
- d. electronic resources
- e. Enid Baa Library
- f. St. Thomas Regional Library in Tutu
- g. Children's page
- h. Williams Library

The site design focuses on technologies that enable communication and interactivity and simplifies access to resources and services so that using the website for research is less complicated.

McNAUGHTON SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES

DLAM maintains its subscriptions renewal to McNaughton Book Rental Services which enables public librarians to select and deliver to library patrons the most sought-after titles in hardcover, paperback, audio book, and DVDs for all ages. The subscription service permits the public libraries in the Virgin Islands to stay up-to-date with the hottest releases and popular authors.

SIRSIDYNIX SYMPHONY

One of the greatest accomplishments by DLAM during the period of the LSTA Grant was the migration of its more than 20-year-old SirsiDynix System to the new SirsiDynix Symphony. With Symphony, DLAM benefits from intuitive, robust technology with an enhanced array of features, a rich patron interface, and a fully adaptable, expandable and customizable platform.

Symphony makes it easy for patrons to connect to e-Library resources. An attractive feature is that the library can run all the tools of the Symphony system on less bandwidth than it typically takes to stream a YouTube video.

BOOKMOBILES

State-of-the art bookmobiles operate on both St. Croix and St. Thomas on varying schedules during the summer and school calendar year. Both are in great demand! Bookmobiles are equipped with wireless communication capacity and provide much appreciated remote access to public library collections catalogs. The vehicles pay frequent visits to summer camps, rural areas, and participate in community events throughout the year. This outreach effort results in direct and broader exposure to library services for juvenile and young adult patrons in the Territory. Bookmobile staff successfully encourage many of these users to sign up for library cards.

LSTA Priority 2: Have library services been developed that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national and international electronic networks?

Support for subscription databases and the development of Virgin Islands-specific online information tools are the two strategies employed to address Priority 2. DLAM public libraries provide electronic access to Virgin Islands-specific resources that contain unique information tailored to local needs, such as:

- eBooks
- EBSCO
- Scholastic Cozy Corner
- Other Programs

eBOOKS

DLAM was able to purchase a subscription to TumbleBookLibrary which is an online collection of TumbleBooks – animated, talking picture books which teach children the joy of reading in a format they easily learn to love.

TumbleBooks contain animation, sound, music and narration in existing picture books in order to produce an electronic picture book which can be read or used for read-alouds. The eBooks grade levels are two-tiered: grades K-5 and grades 6-12.

EBSCO

DLAM received a prestigious IMLS (Institute of Museum and Library Services) 2011 Library Services Grant for the Pacific Territories, Freely Associated States, and the Virgin Islands to benefit the Virgin Islands public libraries.

The grant includes a two year subscription to EBSCO's most robust multidisciplinary **MasterFile**, a database designed for public libraries, featuring almost 2,000 full-text publications such as Sports Illustrated, Ebony, Jet, Hispanic, Time, Antiques, and Horticulture, and over 107,000 primary source materials, and 1,000 reference books. **Business Source Elite** is a popular business research database, and it includes full text for more than 1,000 journals. **Newspaper Source™** provides cover-to-cover full text for 35 national (U.S.) and international newspapers such as USA Today, The Washington Post, The Washington Times, The Times (London), The Toronto Star, and others. The database also contains selective full text for 375 regional (U.S.) newspapers and full text television and radio news transcripts are provided from CBS News, CNN, CNN International, FOX News, and NPR, among others.

A special feature of the EBSCO subscription includes **Caribbean Search**, the world's most comprehensive research database covering the Caribbean Region. This database features more than 200,000 records with full text for more than 80 journals and magazines, over 500 full text books and additional content ranging from economic and country reports to conference papers to Caribbean newspapers.

SCHOLASTIC COZY CORNER

Each public library in the Virgin Islands received Scholastic Cozy Corner. Cozy Corner is an innovative early language and literacy program created and designed to enhance the storytime experience for young learners, ages 2-to-4, through ten storytime theme packs. The packs contain a big book, read-aloud books, music, character cards and detailed storytime plans to help kids connect with the books, and support topic-rich conversations in English and Spanish.

OTHER PROGRAMS

The following program was described in detail in the preceding sections: NEW WEBSITE LAUNCHED.

LSTA Priority 3: Have electronic and other linkages been provided among and between all types of libraries?

TECHNOLOGY

The libraries on the islands of St. Croix and St. John are in critical need of technological upgrades. These facilities are constantly plagued with technology problems, which serve as a source for public scrutiny and complaints. Most of the problems occur due to antiquated infrastructures, outdated equipment and the lack of additional professional information technology staff members. In the 21st century, libraries are poised to be at the forefront of technology and information sharing but the Virgin Islands is far behind in this respect.

The VIALS network offers resource-sharing services, including those offered by Sirsi Dynix Symphony, to all public libraries within the Territory. With almost 210,000 entries in the combined catalog, the service is heavily utilized by staff and patrons.

Unfortunately, this is one of the key objectives under the LSTA funding for 2008-2012 that could not be achieved to the desired level because of the lack of collaboration and shared resources between DLAM, DOE and UVI. By using the same automated library system on a shared network, greater communication and information sharing would be possible between the Territory's public libraries, school libraries and academic libraries. It is true, however, that while DOE and UVI ultimately chose to operate their own network system, DOE also purposefully chose SirsiDynix Symphony as its automated library system of choice. The rationale was that this might ensure easier patron access since delivery systems in each network would be similar (requiring a gentler learning curve). Uniformity would also facilitate training and professional development for all librarians in the Territory with the possibility of sharing information on the use and management of the same SirsiDynix product. Sadly, the sharing of catalog information cannot take place now among the segregate networks. Perhaps the greatest potential for uniting information resources in all libraries throughout the Territory has been lost.

LSTA Priority 4: What public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations developed?

The following programs and activities support this priority:

- Library Cards for Over 500 First Graders
- National Park Service
- Virgin Islands Council on the Arts
- Rotary International
- First Lady
- Department of Justice – Bureau of Corrections
- National Book Festival
- St. Thomas/St. John and St. Croix Library Associations
- Other Programs

LIBRARY CARDS FOR OVER 500 FIRST GRADERS

In 2010, for a celebration of Black History Month, and the Twenty-First National Read-In sponsored by the Black Caucus of the National Council for Teacher Education (“NCTE”) and NCTE, DLAM collaborated with the National Park Service and the St. Croix Council of the International Reading Association for a major library card registration for St. Croix first graders.

Over 500 first graders, teachers and parents converged on the grounds of historic Fort Christiansvaern and were met by the St. Croix Bookmobile. The children received library cards and were treated to readings of stories and poems written by local African-American authors.

The Read-In has been endorsed by the International Reading Association. Over a million readers of all ethnic groups, from 49 states, the West Indies, and African countries have participated in the past years and are expected to continue this year. The goal is to make the celebration of African American literacy a traditional part of Black History Month activities.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DLAM participated in the Department of the Interior’s Virgin Islands National Park Service 21st Annual St. John Folklife Festival on the island of St. John. Hundreds of students, visitors and residents filled Annaberg Plantation Ruins. DLAM’s Territorial Director spoke of the significance of libraries, literacy and the benefits of reading, and held interactive discussions each day with the students in attendance from the St. Thomas/St. John districts. The theme of the 2012 festival was “Wake Up and Plant a Seed.”

DLAM also participated in the National Park Service’s Summer Reef Ranger and Junior Park Ranger Outreach programs Kick-off with the St. Croix Bookmobile. The event was a kickoff to let the children of the community know about the programs that the National Park has available, and to showcase information from other invited agencies.

VIRGIN ISLANDS COUNCIL OF THE ARTS

DLAM collaborated with the Virgin Islands Council of the Arts for “Big Read” kick off activities for a period of three years utilizing the St. Thomas Bookmobile with staff on site. On St. Croix, the division participated in Big Read Book Parade and Fair.

ROTARY INTERNATIONAL

DLAM has been the recipient of book donations during Rotary Literacy Month for both the St. Croix and St. Thomas Bookmobiles. Both the Director and Assistant Director have been guest speakers at Rotary Clubs territory-wide.

FIRST LADY

DLAM participated in the St. Croix Botanical Garden’s Saturday Story Hour with First Lady Cecile de Jongh and has participated in numerous events and functions to promote the literacy initiatives of the First Lady.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE- BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS

DLAM collaborated and partnered with the Department of Justice, Bureau of Corrections and the Office of the Governor to conduct pilot programs on both islands utilizing the St. Thomas and the St. Croix bookmobiles. The pilot, “Beyond the Walls thru a Bookmobile,” became a joint educational rehabilitation initiative, and a collective effort to reduce recidivism.

Both the St. Croix and St. Thomas Bookmobiles introduced the inmate participants to the vast library resources that are available, and encouraged and promoted reading, literacy, self-help and lifelong learning. The inmates received library cards, an orientation of the bookmobile services, and were able to check out books. The program was very successful, but due to a reduction in staffing and internal reorganization changes in the Bureau, the program has been temporarily suspended.

NATIONAL BOOK FESTIVAL

DLAM participates in the National Book Festival: Pavilion of the States with an exhibit representation. For eleven consecutive years, the Territorial Director served as the U.S. Territories Coordinator and has served in this capacity. The Territorial Director coordinates the participation of American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands in the Pavilion of the States. Over twenty representatives from U.S. Territories and LOC are assigned junior league volunteers and man four territory tables/exhibits. Representatives discuss and distribute

materials about their respective reading and literacy programs, and field questions and inquiries from the more than 200,000 booklovers who gather on the National Mall for the annual event. The National Book Festival is organized and sponsored by LOC with Honorary Chairs President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama.

ST. THOMAS/ST.JOHN AND ST.CROIX LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS

DLAM partnered with the St. Thomas/St. John Library Association during National Library Week at the Annual Read on the Green Community Day at UVI in St. Thomas and with the St. Croix Library Association for various events.

OTHER PROGRAMS

Detail for the following programs is contained in the preceding sections:

GOVERNOR’S SUMMER READING PROGRAM
FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARIES
VIRGIN ISLANDS CENTER FOR THE BOOK
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS FREE SURPLUS BOOKS

LSTA Priority 5: How were library services targeted to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills?

REGIONAL LIBRARY

Several strategies, including some of those already described above, address this priority. One major project undertaken to help Virgin Islanders with visual impairments is the services offered by the Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (the “Regional Library”).

The Regional Library, also known as the “Talking Books” library, is located in Golden Rock on St. Croix. The library serves the entire United States Virgin Islands. The library provides books without charge on cassette tapes and in digital format. Digital cassettes and machines are provided at no cost for eligible users. The production of cassette titles has been stopped, but hundreds of titles are still available in that format.

Talking Books and magazines are also available through the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service. This free service features thousands of downloadable titles and can be used by eligible readers who have Internet access and are registered with our library.

Talking Books enable those who have trouble reading a printed page to stay connected to their communities. Not being able to read creates participation barriers to activities that many people love, like following the sports page or using a cookbook. The program loans members a wide selection of recorded books and magazines, Braille books and magazines, and music scores in Braille and large print.

Many of the services provided by DLAM are intended to “provide expanded, equitable access to library information, materials and services territory-wide to the people of the Virgin Islands.

The National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), a division of LOC, is a free service available to people of all ages whose low vision, blindness, or physical handicaps make reading a standard printed page difficult. Through NLS’s national network of cooperating libraries, books and magazines on cassettes and in Braille are mailed directly, at no cost, to any eligible person or United States citizen living abroad who cannot read or use standard print materials because of a visual or physical handicap.

Ms. Collins, consultant for NLS, visited the Regional Library on a biennial visit to St. Croix . Her task was to personally inspect the network libraries under her purview and, most importantly, bring each library up-to-date on new developments within the network of NLS regional libraries nationwide. Ms. Collins reported that Regional Library has implemented the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service to provide access to downloadable books and magazines online.

LSTA Priority 6: How have library and information services been targeted to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families with incomes below the poverty line?

Two strategies, already described in the preceding paragraphs, significantly address these needs. See, REGIONAL LIBRARY and DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE – BUREAU OF CORRECTIONS in the preceding sections.

CONCLUSION

DLAM’s system of public libraries resources and assets has used LSTA funds and effectively to meet the needs of the VIPLS Libraries in a manner consistent with the LSTA priorities, to

promote the development of library services at the local level, and to provide access to electronic resources and other significant collections.

Due to financial constraints and the uncertain economic environment, not all of the ambitious goals set out in the Plan were accomplished during 2008-2012, but the most strategically crucial of those objectives were successfully addressed. During those years DLAM also established a firm foundation for future growth and development of quality library services throughout the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Appendix A – List of Acronyms and Defined Terms

| | |
|------------------|---|
| BARD | Braille and Audio Reading Download |
| Center | Virgin Islands Center for the Book |
| DLAM | Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums |
| DOE | Virgin Islands Department of Education |
| DPNR | Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources |
| Evaluator | Independent Education Consultant Nancy Christie |
| ILS | Integrated Library System |
| IMLS | Institute of Museum and Library Services |
| LOC | Library of Congress |
| LSTA | Library Services and Technology Act |
| MARC | Machine readable cataloging |
| NCTE | National Council on Teacher Education |
| NLS | National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped |
| NLS | National Library Service |
| OCLC | Online Computer Library Center |
| Plan | A Five-Year Technology Plan for Public Libraries in the United States Virgin Islands 2008-2012, in Accordance with the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) |
| Regional Library | Virgin Islands Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped |
| SLAAs | State Library Administrative Agencies |
| TRG | Charles Wesley Turnbull Regional Library (St. Thomas) |
| UVI | University of the Virgin Islands |
| VIALS | Virgin Islands Automated Library System |
| VILINET | Virgin Islands Library Network |

Appendix B – DLAM Plan

Appendix C – Résumé of Evaluator

Appendix D – Persons Interviewed

Division of Libraries, Archives and Museums
Department of Planning and Natural Resources

Ingrid A. Bough
Territorial Director

Susan Laura Lugo
Assistant Director/Territorial Archivist

Symra Chinnery
Librarian
Enid M. Baa Public Library (St. Thomas)

Carol McGuinness
Librarian
Elaine Ione Sprauve Public Library (St. John)

Letitia Gittens
Librarian
Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (St. Croix)

Christian Doute
IT Systems Manager

Aretha Marshall
IT Systems Program Librarian