

**An Independent Evaluation of the
Rhode Island Office of Library & Information Services'
Implementation of the
Library Services & Technology Act
Five-Year State Plan
2003-2007**

**Prepared by Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants
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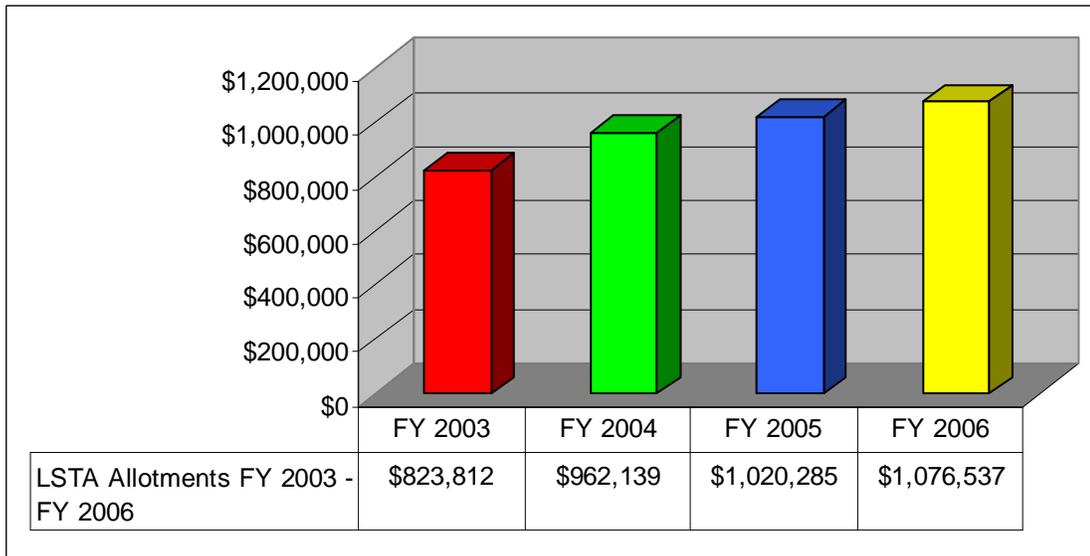
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I. Introductory Statement and Summary of Impact of IMLS Funds to Support State Library Services

The Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) serves as the state library administrative agency for Rhode Island. The mission of the agency is to support and strengthen library services by planning, by coordinating, by providing consultation services, training, and funding, and by promoting collaboration among libraries to ensure that all residents will benefit from free, open, convenient, and timely access to excellent library and information resources and services. It accomplishes these tasks with funding from a variety of sources including monies provided through the Federal LSTA program.

As is the case throughout the nation, Federal funds account for a small percentage of the total expended for library services in Rhode Island. An illustration of this is the fact that public libraries in Rhode Island derived less than one percent (0.8%) of their operating expenditures from Federal sources in fiscal year (FY) 2004¹.

Because LSTA funds are distributed primarily on the basis of population, the amount of LSTA funding allotted to the State of Rhode Island is relatively small in comparison to other states. Rhode Island's FY 2006 allotment of \$ 1,076,537 places it 43rd among the states. Graph 1 below shows the history of LSTA allotments to Rhode Island since FY 2003. Amounts of LSTA funding available have been \$ 823,812, \$ 962,139, \$ 1,020,285, and \$ 1,076,537 for FY 2003, 2004, 2005, and 2006 respectively.



Graph 1 LSTA Allotments – FY 2003 – FY 2006

¹ Chute, A., Kroe, P.E., O'Shea, P., Craig, T., Freeman, M., Hardesty, L., McLaughlin, J.F., and Ramsey, C.J. (2006). *Public Libraries in the United States: Fiscal Year 2004* (NCES 2006-349). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

As was mentioned above, operational funds for library services in Rhode Island come from a number of sources. The State funds or contributes to the funding of a number of important library programs in the State:

- State aid to public libraries (25 percent of local support)
- Construction programs for public libraries (up to 50 percent match with local funds)
- Two online full-text databases are state funded
- Statewide multitype library delivery of library materials (in the most recent year, the State contributed 37 percent of the total; LSTA funds covered the remaining 63 percent)
- The RI telecommunications education access fund supports a basic level of internet connectivity for all of the qualified schools (kindergarten through grade 12) and libraries in the state

Foundation funding also contributed to funding Rhode Island library programs during the period covered by this evaluation. Following are three examples:

- The Champlin Foundation in RI has supported the purchases of computers and hardware for public libraries, which allowed libraries to implement advanced technology
- Funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation paid for nine Spanish Language Outreach sessions
- “Staying Connected” funds from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation paid for many technology training sessions

Although the amount of LSTA aid is relatively small in the big picture, it is nevertheless important. Examples of the kinds of efforts supported with Federal funds include:

- Resource sharing efforts through the Library of Rhode Island (LORI)
- LORI grants, which use LSTA to leverage other funds which together improve connections among other consortia including CLAN, RILINK, and HELIN.
- The development of the OLIS/LORI web sites that add interactive capabilities in order to improve communication and reduce paperwork.
- The Talking Books Plus program and accompanying services for people with vision impairments.
- Summer Reading Programs for children and teens, as well as other early literacy efforts, general consulting, and a range of continuing education programs.
- Public Library Literacy Grants which allow several public libraries to increase staffing and coordination to serve additional learners.

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

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

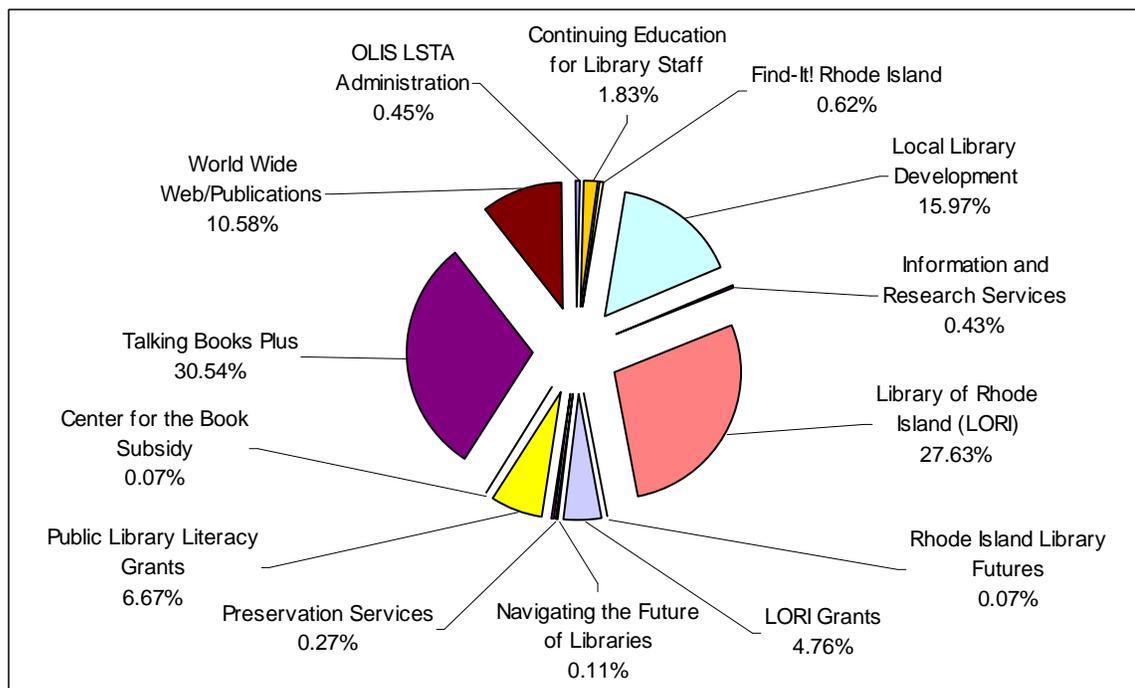
The three goals in the Rhode Island State Library's Five-Year Plan 2003-2007 support the LSTA priorities as outlined in Chart 1.

Chart 1: LSTA Priorities supported by Rhode Island State Library Five-Year Plan 2003-2007	
LSTA Purpose	Goal
1, 4, 5, 6	<i>GOAL 1: Provide library services to the underserved.</i>
1, 2, 3, 4	<i>GOAL 2: Collaboration/Cooperation of a multi-type nature, including public, academic, school, and special libraries, museums, and archives.</i>
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	<i>GOAL 3: Increase public awareness of the intrinsic value of libraries in promoting personal and economic growth for every resident in every community through the wide array of programs and services that libraries offer.</i>

In order to support the goals outlined above, OLIS allocates LSTA funds to a variety of programs, projects and initiatives. Several of these have already been mentioned. The vast majority of the programs that are supported with LSTA funds are statewide in scope. Graph 2 on the following page provides a summary of how LSTA funds have been allocated in Rhode Island over the three fiscal years

(FY 2003, FY 2004, and FY 2005) covered by this evaluation. As you can see from the pie-graph, nearly three-quarters (74.14%) of the LSTA allotment over the three-year span has been directed to three categories. They are:

- Talking Books Plus (30.54%),
- The Library of Rhode Island (LORI) (27.63%),
- Local Library Development (15.97%)



Graph 2 – LSTA Allocation by Program/Initiative FY 2003 – FY 2005

It should be noted that all three of the programs that account for the majority of LSTA expenditures are multi-faceted. That is, the categories represent umbrella categories under which a number of different activities occur. For example, the Library of Rhode Island (LORI) program includes a certification and standards program, access to the OCLC FirstSearch database, training activities, and delivery services. The “Local Library Development” category encompasses consulting activities and the coordination of youth services such as the statewide summer reading program.

Even the Talking Books Plus program has several distinct components. It includes contracted services with the Perkins’ Braille and Talking Books Library that provides qualified Rhode Island residents with access to the traditional offerings of the National Library Service for the Blind (NLS), a Rhode Island based readers’ advisory service, and access to an extensive large print collection through an innovative partnership with the East Providence Public Library. In summary, although the lion’s share of LSTA funds is expended on a limited number of programs, the reach of the programs that are supported is fairly extensive. Chart 2 on the next page provides a summary of Rhode Island’s progress toward the goals that were included in the 2003 - 2007 LSTA Plan.

Chart 2: Summary of Progress Toward 2003 – 2007 Goals

	No Progress	Progressing	Met Goal	Surpassed Goal
GOAL 1: Provide library services to the underserved			X	
1.A. Make available a full range of library services to individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island.				X
1.B. Support libraries in their efforts to collaborate and cooperate with other agencies in providing literacy, information literacy, and adult education programs for their residents.			X	
1.C. Assist libraries in their efforts to increase services to children and young adults.			X	
GOAL 2: Collaboration/Cooperation of a multi-type nature, including public, academic, school, and special libraries, museums, and archives.			X	
2.A. Create a digital information environment for Rhode Island residents, students, and businesses to ensure access to a core set of information resources			X	
2.B. Maintain and extend effective library and information services for users by providing library staff with training and support.			X	
GOAL 3: Increase public awareness of the intrinsic value of libraries in promoting personal and economic growth for every resident in every community through the wide array of programs and services that libraries offer.		X		
3.A. Increase the amount and availability of information on library services and programs within Rhode Island so that more individuals can take advantage of these.		X		
3.B. Create a collective vision for library and museum services in Rhode Island.		X		

The LSTA funds allotted to Rhode Island have been used in a variety of ways to improve library and information services in the Ocean State. Funds have been expended for important purposes such as to support literacy initiatives and Summer Reading activities for children. The LSTA program has been critically important in efforts to extend and integrate resource sharing among all types of libraries. OLIS has leveraged improvements by investing relatively small amounts of LSTA funding to support delivery, consortial technology upgrades, and standards. In the end, the result of these activities is expanded access for library users and greater efficiency through the reduction of needless duplication in libraries.

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

General Observations

Rhode Island's Five-Year LSTA Plan for 2003 – 2007 consists of three goals and a total of seven objectives. Given the fact that the State's LSTA allotment is relatively small, keeping the plan relatively simple makes great sense. After a careful examination of activities that have been carried out under the 2003 – 2007 Plan, the evaluators conclude that Rhode Island is meeting two of its three goals and that it has made progress toward achieving the third. In regard to the Plan's objectives, we conclude that OLIS has surpassed one of its objectives, has met four objectives and is progressing toward achieving the remaining two.

That being said, much of our evaluation is rather subjective. While the 2003 – 2007 Plan provided many strategies regarding how OLIS intended to pursue its goals, the Plan lacks detail in terms of how the goals and objectives were going to be measured. The result is that the evaluators often found themselves measuring Rhode Island's progress against what we are aware is happening in other states rather than by the State's own declared measures.

Outcome-based evaluation principles have been employed in a few selected programs that provide services directly to end-users. However, even this measurement, while well conceived, has been added onto programs rather than being built into them.

One other observation is relevant. Rhode Island has accomplished a great deal with the LSTA funds that have been allotted to the State in the three-year period (FY 2003 – FY 2005) that is covered by this evaluation. We believe that this is due primarily to the fact that the State did an excellent job of identifying needs and setting priorities in the process of developing the 2003 – 2007 Plan. Furthermore, the agency remained focused on its high level goals and remained flexible in regard to the strategies it employed to pursue its goals.

Rhode Island's 2003 – 2007 Plan contains a large number of strategies; 52 to be exact. The consultants found that some of the stated strategies have not been carried out. In fact, many of the items that are characterized as strategies in the Plan are activities rather than strategies and, although some of them have not been carried out, other actions designed to meet the Plan's goals and objectives have been substituted and implemented.

Following is an assessment of progress that has been made toward achieving the goals and objectives outlined in the 2003 – 2007 Plan.

GOAL 1: Provide library services to the underserved.

Rhode Island is meeting, and in some cases, surpassing this goal.

Objective 1.A: Make available a full range of library services to individuals with disabilities in Rhode Island.

The Talking Books Plus program was selected as the program to receive a more in-depth review. Additional information about this program can be found in Section III (Results of In-Depth Evaluation).

Assessment

Talking Books Plus acts as the umbrella program under which special library services to individuals with disabilities are offered. It includes a wide range of services including those typically associated with the National Library Service for the Blind as well as some innovative outreach efforts that provide resources such as large print and descriptive videos.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of Rhode Island's Talking Books Plus program is that much of the program is handled by organizations outside of the Office of Library and Information Services. Talking book and Braille materials are provided by the Perkins' Braille and Talking Books Library while access to large print materials is secured through a sub-grant awarded to the East Providence Public Library and descriptive videos are supplied through the Lincoln Public Library. OLIS provides coordination for the entire program and unifies it through its website. OLIS also acts as a connection point for individuals seeking assistance regarding assistive devices and other support services.

The result is a quality program that meets or surpasses Objective 1.A.

Evidence of Success

There are many evidences of the success of this program. Use is substantial and both anecdotal information collected by OLIS and information gathered by the evaluators through direct interviews support the conclusion that the program is effective. The program shows ample evidence of effective collaboration with both non-profit and governmental entities.

While librarians in the State gave the program a rating of 3.98 on a five-point scale in the web-survey, the fact that more than half of the survey respondents did not choose to rate the service suggests that librarians aren't as well acquainted with the service as they might be. This is an area that could be improved upon in the future. Another concern about the program is the fact that it is absorbing an

increasing percentage of Rhode Island's LSTA funding each year. In FY 2003, Talking Books Plus accounted for 23.33% of Rhode Island's LSTA allotment. In FY 2005, this percentage had grown to 38.50%. A concerted effort needs to be made to identify other potential ongoing streams of funding.

Objective 1.B: Support libraries in their efforts to collaborate and cooperate with other agencies in providing literacy, information literacy and adult education programs for their residents.

The Public Library Adult Literacy Program was selected as the program to be examined for the implementation of outcome-based evaluation principles. Additional information regarding this program can be found in Section IV (Progress in Showing Results of Library Initiatives or Services).

Assessment

OLIS has sought to meet this objective by providing sub-grants to public libraries to carry out adult literacy programs. Two libraries, the Coventry Public Library and the Providence Public Library have received grants in each of the three years covered by the evaluation. Both of the programs have been effective and have created strong ties between literacy students and public libraries.

OLIS has encouraged both programs to employ outcome-based evaluation techniques and both have started to track a variety of outcomes that are related to participation in the literacy efforts. Some examples include:

- Completing an Education Function Level (as defined by the National Reporting standards)
- Obtaining a library card
- Obtaining a driver's license
- Purchasing a vehicle
- Writing a resume
- Completing a job application
- Receiving a green card
- Obtaining employment
- Writing a poem
- Enrolling in or completing a job training course
- Becoming a citizen
- Registering to vote and voting
- Reading to a child for the first time
- Increasing involvement in their child's education
- Increasing involvement in their community

The program at the Coventry Public Library is basically a local program while the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI), although housed and coordinated through the Providence Public Library, involves five library systems in the State. There is no question that the programs are accomplishing good things and that they are meeting Objective 1.B. in the areas that they serve. The question regarding these programs is how they will be used to achieve the objective in all areas of the State and how the programs will be sustained over time. The evaluators do not believe that OLIS intended that these sub-grant programs would continue to be funded by LSTA for an indeterminate length of time.

The two adult literacy programs provide some excellent information on which other literacy efforts can be built. If the projects continue to receive LSTA funds, a new objective for the programs should be identifying how such programs, once launched, can become self-sustaining. It is possible that a program that is truly statewide could be built on the RIFLI framework; however, even if this strategy is employed, OLIS must work with that program to craft a long-term funding model that is sustainable.

The two literacy programs are meeting Objective 1.B. in the areas that they service. However, work remains to be done to identify a model for public library literacy programs that can be sustained and that can offer services to students in all areas of Rhode Island.

Evidence of Success

Given the sizes of the sub-grants that have been awarded to the Coventry Public Library and to the Providence Public Library, both programs have generated outputs and outcomes that are quite positive. Students in the programs are gaining more than reading/literacy skills. They are becoming more engaged in their communities, in the education of their children, and in self-sufficiency.

Literacy students enrolled in the two programs have obtained employment, moved on to higher levels of education and become citizens as a result of their participation. Furthermore, the program has effectively connected literacy students with an ongoing educational support network, namely, the public library.

Objective 1.C: Assist libraries in their efforts to increase services to children and young adults.

Several different activities and initiatives contributed to Rhode Island's success in meeting Objective 1.C. They include the Summer Reading Program (and Summer Reading Program for Teens), support for early emergent literacy (primarily through training and the "Mother Goose Asks, Why?" program), and additional continuing education efforts targeting library staff members.

Summer Reading Program

The Summer Reading Program varies in specifics from library to library in response to the needs of the local community and the inventiveness of the individual children's librarians. In general, the Program runs five to eight weeks, during which time children read a certain number of books or read for a certain amount of time. The children report on the books orally or through a variety of projects, then their reading is recorded in reading records or through a theme-related bulletin board or game sheet.

Activities

Rhode Island, like many other states, has joined the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP). OLIS coordinated the planning meetings, selection of the statewide theme, creation of a planning manual and materials, and publicity, and subsidized educational programs presented by a variety of performers and educators. The OLIS children's consultant worked with an advisory council. OLIS hosted an annual meeting at which libraries presented data collected to measure the effectiveness of the program.

Since joining the CSLP, state funding reimburses public libraries \$.25 for each child who participated in the previous year, plus a base amount of \$10. The libraries receive a voucher which they can then use to get materials from the CSLP vendor. LSTA funding also subsidized expenses for seven performers; libraries paid \$30 for the first performer and increased amounts, up to \$150, for additional performances.

2003-04 partners in the Summer Reading Program included Rhode Island public libraries, IMLS, McDonald's Restaurants of RI, Citizens Bank, Coca-Cola, the Pawtucket Red Sox baseball team, and twelve area museums.

Outputs

The number of children participating is summarized in Chart 3.

Chart 3 : Summer Reading Program	FY 2002 Summer 2003	FY 2003 Summer 2004	FY 2004 Summer 2005	FY 2005 Summer 2006
Children who registered	13,861	14,072	12,527	13,599
Children who completed the program	8,136	7,904	7,512	8,100
Children with disabilities who registered*	NA	NA	NA	163
Percentage of children who completed the program	60%	56%	60%	60%
Number of programs	267	267	300	304
Attendance at programs	20,501	20,670	17,934	24,139
Bookmarks distributed	40,000	40,000	44,000	20,000
Books distributed	9,000	NA	4,500	5,000

* Not tracked until 2005

Outcomes

OLIS collected outcomes statements from the families and children who participated in the Summer Reading Program.

Some comments by parents after the 2003-04 programs indicate the impact on language achievement, motivation, and family reading habits:

“My child went from below grade level to at-grade level because of the Summer Reading Program.”

“Nowhere else except for the library does my daughter have to set a goal and reach it.”

“Book Buddies program helps children attain their goals better than simply reading independently.”

“Spinning the Globe to talk about books motivated a reluctant reader.”

“Our family started reading together because of the Summer Reading Program.”

“The Summer Reading Program got our family into the ‘reading habit.’ We were taking home and reading 12 books each week, and we still do!”

The 2004-05 State Library report also included some comments from children:

“I never thought I’d have a Boxcar Children of my own to keep from the library!”

“...I just wanted to tell you that I had the best summer of my life this year. It wouldn’t of turned out so good without your help. I wished it lasted the entire summer. I hope you have the activities again next year. My friends and I love coming to the Exeter Public Library. There is always cool stuff happening there.”

Thirty-two children’s librarians from across Rhode Island contributed one or two statements about impact of the program on children who participated in their libraries. Two-thirds of the statements were relevant to outcomes, while one-third were not, confirming the need for more training for librarians in the use of OBE. In 2004-05, some librarians reported changes:

“A boy was reading two hours a week. He needed a bit extra to make his goal. His whole family got involved—aunts, grandparents, and cousins spent time reading with him and he surpassed his goal by four hours.”

“We have a successful collaboration with the elementary school. Teachers and the principal volunteer to offer story hours throughout the summer, which are wildly popular and keep the children coming back.”

“They liked coming back to see their cut-outs with their names on them. The parents were grateful for this program that kept their children reading and writing over the summer, instead of being parked in front of the TV or computer.”

In the online survey, librarians rated the Summer Reading Program second in importance (4.53 out of 5.0), just behind LORI resource sharing. They disagreed with the statement “Public libraries, rather than OLIS, should pay for summer reading program performers” (2.32 out of 5.0).

In phone interviews, one library director felt that the Summer Reading Program was one of the two most important programs of OLIS. Others praised the OLIS children’s services consultant. On the other hand, another library director noted that her library was capable of running its own summer reading program.

In the focus group, public library directors noted that many libraries do not have a professional children's librarian, so the centrally planned and coordinated Summer Reading Program is important. They identified it as one of OLIS's key strengths. Children's librarians also voiced strong support for the program, which "makes us look good." Public library directors and children's librarians, as well as school library media specialists, appreciate the low-cost performers and the statewide corporate sponsorships arranged by OLIS.

Summer Reading Program for Teens

Activities

In FY 2004, OLIS initiated a Summer Reading Program for teens with the theme "Game On at the Library."

Outputs

Fifteen public libraries and 872 teens participated.

Outcomes

Participants in the focus group for children's and youth services librarians praised the Summer Reading Program for teens:

"It's hard for us to gather that money. We don't need big money, but we exhaust local businesses quickly in getting money to support programming."

"The ready-made corporate sponsorships really are a help."

Comments from two focus group participants indicate that some communities and libraries are working on after-school programming for teens. This may develop into an opportunity for libraries to serve their communities in the next few years.

Early Emergent Literacy – Mother Goose Asks "Why?"

The Mother Goose program is a literacy project that empowers parents to share great children's books and related science activities with their children. The conversations and investigations that result increase positive interaction between parent and child while incorporating the process skills of science and enhancing language development.

The program offers hands-on sessions, as well as materials, that build on a child's natural curiosity through investigations and conversations based on books. The

sessions, developed by the Vermont Center for the Book, are led by a librarian who introduces parents, caregivers, teachers, or children aged three to eight to great picture books and related activities. Participants receive a tote bag with books, materials, and a manual to share with the children in their home, class, or childcare facility.

This project is a collaboration among the Office of Library and Information Services, public libraries, museums, schools, and agencies serving at-risk children.

Activities

In 2003, a \$68,878 Higher Education Partnership grant for Improving Teacher Quality resulted in a 15-session graduate-credit course titled “Mother Goose Goes to College (and Majors in Math). Training in “You Can Count on Mother Goose” combined children’s books and math curriculum-related activities. Project partners were Rhode Island College, Providence School Department, Cranston School Department, Providence Public Library, Cranston Public Library, CHILDSPAN, and the Providence Children’s Museum.

In 2004, OLIS expanded the initiative beyond the Mother Goose program to a broader, research-based early literacy focus on equipping parents and caregivers with the knowledge they need to become their children’s first teachers. OLIS sponsored a series of nine early literacy trainings:

- Music and Movement to Support Early Literacy for Infants and Toddlers* (two sessions)
- Early Literacy Symposium*
- Early Literacy, with author/illustrator/literacy activist Rosemary Wells*
- Great Books for Babies and Toddlers*
- Beginning with Mother Goose*
- Mother Goose Asks ‘Why?’*
- Planning and Presenting Lap Sits and Toddler Times*
- Early literacy video, followed by discussion

Public libraries with staff attended at least three of the seven trainings marked with an * above were eligible to apply for a literacy grant of \$250 to facilitate implementation.

The Newport Public Library received a grant for Mother Goose materials. Two Mother Goose training sessions were held for the staff at that library and from other libraries who had not attended training in recent years.

The Mother Goose team initiated development of a “Getting Ready for Kindergarten” calendar, based on the Early Learning Standards from the Rhode Island Departments of Human Services and Education, and including books to

share, library and literacy tips for parents, and activities color-coded to the domains from the Standards, for each month. Project partners were Providence Public Library, Cranston Public Library, the Providence Children’s Museum, and CHILDSPAN, an organization that supports professional development of individuals serving children from birth through school-age.

The calendar was piloted with parents and childcare providers. Their feedback will aid in completing the calendar and obtaining grant funding. Comments from field testers indicate that the calendar introduced new early literacy concepts, that parents liked the activities that supported a ‘play’ approach to learning and spent time doing them with their children, and that they were surprised by the services offered by the library. The Spanish language activities and books were appreciated. Childcare providers also liked the activities and felt that the calendar could serve as a “bridge between center and home.”

Outputs

Hundreds of library staff members, early childhood providers and educators have been exposed to the latest concepts in early emergent literacy. Through their attendance at training sessions, librarians have enabled their libraries to qualify for small programming grants that enable them to apply what they have learned.

Outcomes

Comments from some workshop participants indicate *changed attitude* and *new knowledge*:

“I feel more comfortable about doing such a program.”

“This workshop presented information that made it possible to set up a successful program.”

Anecdotally, two teachers reported training other teachers in their school. Several teachers held Family Math Nights to introduce this approach for math and literacy to parents.

Some teacher comments:

“Made me excited about teaching math again, after 25 years. I never do a math lesson now without the literature piece. I have used all lessons from my small group already, picked up at least 30 new ideas.”

“I have been teaching for only two years. I was very insecure and intimidated when I started this class; now I feel much more comfortable, and I love teaching math without stress or question of ‘Am I doing this right?’”

“I used the Button Box with my Kindergarten children and it seemed to bring out a whole new level of sorting. It left them with the idea that they could be responsible for deciding on how they wanted to sort things, not how teachers wanted them to sort things.”

“I’m still surprised by how well the children charted the answers to all my questions about the story. My low-performing students did such an exceptional job verbally.”

“I have ‘found the math’ in the books that I’ve been using for years but never thought about the math.”

The Mother Goose program received compliments during the directors’ and the children’s and youth services librarians’ focus groups:

“Mother Goose program has been a huge help to children’s success.”

“Mother Goose has been great in my community... being trained and being able to bring that into my library and being able to use what I learned in that program elsewhere.”

Other Staff Development Opportunities Related to Children

Activities

OLIS coordinated a number of informal activities intended to encourage communication and development among library staff members who serve children and teens, including round table discussions, brown bag sessions, and “mock” awards deliberations where library staff could review and critique current literature.

Outputs

The number of sessions and participants is summarized in Chart 4.

<i>Chart 4: Professional Development Opportunities for Librarians Who Work with Children and Teens</i>	<i>FY 2003</i>	<i>FY 2004</i>	<i>FY 2005</i>	<i>FY 2006</i>
Young Adult Round Table sessions	3	11	11	11
Young Adult Round Table participants	200	199	173	143
Children's Brown Bag sessions	3	4	3	4
Children's Brown Bag participants	46	85	60	60
Mock Newbery/Caldecott/Sibert sessions	NA	4	5	5
Mock Newbery/Caldecott/Sibert participants	79	68	71	66

Outcomes

In focus groups, one public library director praised the “young adult support.” Children’s and youth services librarians noted that the young adult round table gives them a chance to interact with others from public and school libraries.

Assessment

The Office of Library and Information Services has done an outstanding job of invigorating children’s and youth services in the State and in encouraging the application of sound educational principles in children’s programming activities. OLIS has worked to improve the Summer Reading program through its entry into the Collaborative Summer Library Program, has expanded the program in an effort to reach teens, Spanish language speakers and children with disabilities, and has equipped hundreds of library staff, care providers, and educators with new skills that promise to have a positive impact on thousands of children.

Rhode Island is meeting Objective 1.C. through a variety of important programs and initiatives. The evaluators believe that the staff development activities conducted under this objective are very important to the future of youth services in Rhode Island.

Evidence of Success

While outputs from the summer reading program activities are solid, the reports from librarians through the web survey, focus groups and interviews reveal an even higher level of success. Attitudes and behaviors toward emergent literacy have been altered and the level and quality of children's programming in the State has been improved.

OLIS has already made some attempts to apply outcome-based evaluation to children's programming activities. The evaluators would encourage OLIS to move these efforts to a higher level and to develop outcome-based measures that can be used to determine the progress that is made through staff development activities.

GOAL 2: Collaboration/Cooperation of a multi-type nature, including public, academic, school, and special libraries, museums, and archives

Rhode Island is meeting this goal through the multi-faceted Library of Rhode Island initiative.

Objective 2.A: Create a digital information environment for Rhode Island residents, students, and businesses to ensure access to a core set of information resources.

The Library of Rhode Island (LORI) program represents an exemplary effort to create a vigorous library service environment in Rhode Island that involves all types of libraries. The LORI program provides the platform for all kinds of successful resource sharing activities ranging from interlibrary loan and the physical delivery of materials to collaborative digitization efforts and licensing of databases. While the LORI program has already accomplished great things, the evaluators believe that the initiative has tremendous potential for making Rhode Island a leader in library services.

We believe that the voluntary nature of the program and the leveraging of LSTA and State funds to encourage cooperation form the basis of a model that could be adopted by many other states. The LORI certification process accomplishes more than most mandatory standards programs without much of the accompanying baggage.

Any Rhode Island library is eligible to join the LORI network if it certifies that it complies with LORI Standards. LORI participating libraries are eligible to participate in multitype resource sharing services including interlibrary loan and

FirstSearch; interlibrary delivery of materials; receive consulting services from OLIS staff; and have access to training and technical support for video-over-IP, personal e-mail, and e-mail for interlibrary loan.

The LORI initiative and LORI grants account for the largest share of LSTA expenditures for the FY 2003 – FY 2005 period (a total of 32.39%). However, it should be noted that these dollars support multiple activities under the LORI umbrella and that they are extremely well spent.

Library of Rhode Island (LORI) Initiative and LORI Grants

Activities

During 2001, a LORI Committee (13 librarians and 2 OLIS staff) was formed to encourage multitype library cooperation and goal setting, including resource sharing; serve as connectors among individuals and library organizations across the state by soliciting input from the library community and users; develop library programs to enhance access to core sets of information resources; propose and develop strategies for linking; form working groups to focus intensively on specific topics; enhance the public view of libraries through media campaigns and public programs; examine new avenues for resource sharing; and serve in a general advisory capacity to OLIS and the Library Board of Rhode Island.

In 2003 and 2005, the Committee reviewed LORI Grant proposals and made funding recommendations to the Chief of Library Services.

Revised LORI Standards were approved by the Library Board of Rhode Island in October 2003; libraries began a new round of certification, using newly developed procedures that allowed them to complete most forms and submit most data online.

In 2004-05, OLIS staff modified and improved the online technology assessment that allowed OLIS to review current levels of practice in LORI libraries.

Through the Clearinghouse, LORI provided interlibrary loan title and author requests and access to the OCLC FirstSearch database. With the implementation of patron-initiated interlibrary loan, there has been a substantial increase in usage of delivery.

LORI coordinated statewide delivery. Libraries chose one to five weekly deliveries in 2003-04 or two to five in 2004-05. By late 2006, there were nearly 700 stops per week. In her interview, Donna DiMichele noted that increased delivery required more and more supplies—boxes, slips, and labels—as well as more staff time. Thirty-seven percent of the funding for the delivery service came from the state, the remaining 63 percent from LSTA.

The LORI ILL Working Group is a multitype group comprised of library staff who cooperate to support OLIS ILL activities and work on issues related to the future of ILL in the state. The group trained library staff in the revised ILL Code and procedures.

OLIS's LORI staff held two training sessions and facilitated the applications for e-rate telecommunications discounts for eligible libraries.

They also supported a training session for LORI Standards and four broadcasts of the international Jason Project, using video over IP conferencing.

LORI staff managed the pages on the LORI web site, providing access to LORI library holdings and resources, access to personal and institutional e-mail, web-based discussion groups, and an online calendar and online registration for continuing education offerings.

Staff acted as liaisons with the Ocean State Higher Education, Economic Development, and Administrative Network (OSHEAN), an Internet 2 consortium, and with the Rhode Island Network for Educational Technology (RINET), which supports school library connectivity and SLIP/PPP accounts for LORI member library staff.

During 2003, LORI awarded three grants for projects that would contribute to resource sharing, with emphasis on multitype participation, collaboration, and innovation:

- The Rhode Island Historical Society reformatted its 20th century negative collections in order to improve access by the public.
- Thirteen libraries that were members of the Association of Rhode Island Health Science Libraries integrated their unique and significant holdings into the state's Higher Education Library Network (HELIN). Practicing medical and health science professionals were the primary beneficiaries, but all Rhode Islanders who needed health information also benefited. The libraries experienced cost savings and increased resource sharing opportunities.
- The Rhode Island Library Information Network for Kids (RILINK), an interactive, web-based union catalog of Rhode Island school library holdings, received funding to upgrade the capacity of its servers to meet peak demand and support additional member libraries.

During 2004, LORI awarded grants to:

- Cooperating Libraries Automated Network (CLAN) migrated from Dynix/Horizon to the Innovative Interfaces platform for automated

services, a move that will facilitate the future implementation of a seamless interface between the academic and public libraries' catalogs.

- The Rhode Island Library Information Network for Kids (RILINK), the union catalog shared by 23 elementary schools, one K-8 school, 15 middle schools, four middle-high schools, and 20 high schools, upgraded server memory, increased disk capacity, added a tape backup for its SQL Destiny server, and installed a system firewall, in order to increase capacity and security.

Outputs

LORI program outputs are summarized in Chart 5.

Chart 5: Library of Rhode Island (LORI) Membership and Activity	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
LORI member libraries	165	174	163
Added LORI member libraries	18	8	11
OCLC FirstSearch sessions	13,563	16,773	20,196
OCLC FirstSearch searches	43,118	50,473	56,307
OCLC FirstSearch documents viewed	368	389	306
OCLC FirstSearch interlibrary loans produced	1,353	4,984	4,960
Libraries participating in LORI Delivery	165	174	163
Items delivered	1,313,728*	NA	1,882,438

* FY 2001 figure is shown for comparison purposes

Rhode Island Historical Society Library

The Rhode Island Historical Society Library developed a new workflow that included digitization of negatives and delivery of reproductions, converted data in old electronic and print files, imported the files to a centralized graphics OPAC, and modified and expanded the graphics OPAC to include crosswalks to digital images and finding aids.

Association of Rhode Island Health Science Libraries

The Association of Rhode Island Health Science Libraries established communication channels within the larger HELIN organization, including representation of the collection development, services, and technical infrastructure committees and joined the HELIN listserv. HELIN Associate Member fees were applied to storage of MARC records on the HELIN server and limited use of the circulation module. The group monitored processing of the ARIHSL records to

prepare them for incorporation into the HELIN database. While LC subject headings were protected on the 40 percent of overlaid records, many Medical Subject Headings (MESH) were added to the HELIN database to provide new access points. Staff at each library received individual training on lending and borrowing through HELIN.

In November 2004, the libraries activated their catalogs. For nine of the 13 libraries, this was their first online catalog; the other four libraries experienced significant reductions in cost and improvements in functionality and stability. Their collections are now available to all residents of Rhode Island.

ARIHSL libraries have seen modest increases in interlibrary borrowing and lending, in some cases, establishing new resource-sharing patterns. In addition, the project fostered communication. Their inclusion of these special libraries has also generated enthusiasm within the academic library consortium.

On the online survey, librarians rated the ARIHSL grant at 4.0 out of 5.0 (Chart 5).

In the academic librarians' focus group, one participant noted:

“The good news is the Innovative Interfaces system; we’re using the same software as many of the public libraries now. When students come in, the software for HELIN looks like the one down the street at the public library.”

One anecdote suggests the impact on users: On a Saturday night, a hospital secretary also enrolled in a class at a community college searched the HELIN catalog for materials for a paper. She ordered them online with her library barcode and selected her workplace as the delivery site. A few days later, six items from three different libraries arrived at the hospital.

RILINK

In 2003-04, RILINK installed new servers at the East Bay Educational Collaborative (EBEC), which has a T-1 connection to the Internet through RINET. RILINK's existing server was also moved to EBEC. Nineteen schools participate in the shared catalog and two more are expected to join in 2004-05. The current configuration can provide a complete library automation system for as many as 25 schools. With additional hard drives and memory, the system could serve up to 50 individual school libraries.

In 2004-05, 16 new libraries joined RILINK. The additional hardware allowed the shared system to accommodate increased members and activity and improved security.

The RILINK network received a 4.15 out of 5.0 rating in the online survey of librarians (Chart 5).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that response time has improved since the RILINK servers were moved. In 2003-04, children, teachers, and parents reported that the catalog, named RICAT, was easy to use:

“The RICAT web site was very easy to navigate, very user friendly. We will be visiting a lot more.”

It’s amazing how much information is available to us via the web! The library web site is very fun and easy to use.”

In 2004-05, some student comments suggest that, once they are aware of library resources, students use them:

“...I like how you can get books from other schools.”

“I think that all of these websites are an extremely good idea and informative to all students. They are very easy to use and make looking up research much easier and more efficient. They allow a much wider variety of books and articles to find information. I liked RILINK the best, because I think it is the easiest to operate.”

“I found out that RILINK was very helpful and easy navigating site. I went to it, found what I was looking for, and left in a short period of time. GO RILINK!”

In the focus group of school librarians, one noted:

“The kids are so excited. RILINK opens up another world for them. We get so much support from RILINK and Dorothy (RILINK Exec. Director). It has made so many things possible.”

“We just became a member last spring. The accessibility and availability of the web links are wonderful.

“This is the first time the kids have had access to other libraries. The interlibrary loan has started to increase.”

“This year they were shown how to place a request from home.”

“My goal is to instruct the parents.”

“Reluctant readers made RILINK more important. Even the web links have grade levels.”

“This year the ILL stuff is a cakewalk!”

Now that RILINK makes sharing easy, they would like to see more cooperation in collection development. They also requested that the public library databases be made available to schools through RILINK.

LORI and LORI Grant Summary

Outcomes

LORI received the highest importance rating (4.59 out of 5.0) in the survey of Rhode Island librarians. In the opinion section, librarians had the highest level of agreement with the statement “A single uniform catalog and database licensing program are top priorities...” (4.38 out of 5.0).

The LORI website also ranked well (4.04 out of 5.0) among respondents to the online survey.

In interviews and focus groups, librarians from all types of libraries and various positions agreed that support for resource sharing among all types of libraries is very important. They supported creating a single shared catalog for the state. Public and academic librarians especially valued the statewide delivery and saw it as integrally linked with the catalog and resource sharing services.

They recognized that OLIS created and supports the LORI Standards.

They noted room for improvement in the current interlibrary loan system:

“The ILL system is rather crude. There are CLAN requests, LORI requests, HELIN requests, DOCLINE.”

They acknowledged that they were “almost paralyzed by the enormity of the effort,” but supported the move toward serving all types of libraries:

“We all think we have different patrons, and they’re really all the same people.” We’re just serving them at different time/points in their lives.”

“If we want all of the libraries to work together, they should be doing more with that.”

“They have provided ways for libraries to connect with each other. They have a home-grown interlibrary loan system.”

“The ideal arrangement would be one common system, one catalog, one means to access that catalog...No distinction among the various types of libraries.”

Web Presence Improvements

Activities

The OLIS Web Team created and maintained two sites—the LORI site and a government information site.

The LORI site included Library Services web pages and publications on a web site that acted as a library portal: <http://www.olis.ri.gov>. On the site, they updated information on Rhode Island libraries and Library Services’ programs. The LORI staff provided weblibliographies on subjects of planning, legal resources, U.S. Government, State, and Local Information.

OLIS supported an online interlibrary loan system to facilitate resource sharing activities among libraries of all types.

The Web Team developed web forms to replace most paper forms, including standards certification and workshop and conference registration.

“What’s New on the LORI Web Site” announcements were e-mailed weekly to the library community to alert library staff to additions to the calendar of events, jobline, or continuing education schedule.

OLIS collaborated with other state agencies to make state government information accessible through the World Wide Web and made the information available to the public through a web site with links to all RI government online information: www.info.ri.gov.

OLIS contracted with the Providence Public Library to staff an “Ask a Librarian” reference service for the state portal, www.RI.gov, for all Rhode Island residents.

Outcomes

In the online survey of librarians, librarians disagreed (2.89 out of 5.0) with the statement “I find the OLIS blog to be very useful.”

Focus group participants from public libraries appreciated the web site and the LORI Update e-mails:

“OLIS has been doing a good job of reaching out. They work hard on their web site. With their RSS feed, you don’t have to go back to check on whether they’ve changed anything recently, because it lets you know.”

“OLIS has tried to streamline the annual report.”

“They’re great on technology—blogging and wikis, for example.”

“The communication is good. I use their blog and check on it. Saw the thing about the Friends group and passed it on to my Friends. Check the job line, children’s discussion group. They’re good about sending out e-mails as well.”

“I use the site for directions to libraries, phone numbers.”

Preservation and Digitization

Activities

In 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05, OLIS contracted with the Northeast Document Conservation Center to provide statewide preservation services, including training, evaluation, consultation, and disaster services.

Some of the activities/services of NEDCC include:

- Consulting on implementation of the Rhode Island statewide preservation plan
- Presenting workshops—one on preservation planning, one on disaster recovery, and one on book repair
- Establishing a preservation information e-mail hotline
- Picking up and returning library and archival materials for conservation treatment at member rates
- Providing subsidized surveys of an institution’s preservation needs
- Answering technical assistance requests by phone or e-mail
- Providing Catastrophic Disaster Assistance.

As part of its membership, OLIS held seats on NEDCC’s Board and Advisory Committees.

Outputs

In 2003-04, 21 people participated in a preservation planning workshop and 28 attended the disaster recovery workshop, developed and promoted in conjunction

with the Special Collections Library at the University of Rhode Island. In 2005, 18 people were trained in a basic book repair workshop.

In 2003-05, OLIS staff participated in Board meetings and annually attended three Advisory Committee meetings and reviewed various NEDCC projects including a proposed curriculum for preservation management, a digital preservation assessment tool, and proposed NEDCC digital services.

Outcomes

Digitization was a challenge identified by academic librarians in the focus group. They suggested that OLIS might play a role:

“I could foresee OLIS as the entity to gather the materials to pool into the Rhode Island digital memory.”

Activities

OLIS maintained a search engine service (www.find-it.state.ri.us) of Rhode Island government documents and web sites for the use of libraries and the public who were searching for Rhode Island Government information. Through collaboration with the state portal, Find-It! Rhode Island was available on their website: www.ri.gov.

OLIS collaborated with the Secretary of State in maintaining hardware and software and with other state libraries in upgrading software and methods. It worked with state and local webmasters to provide training in creating usable metadata on their web pages. OLIS staff answered questions resulting from searches, provided a forum and listserv for state and local webmasters, and assisted them in providing accessible web sites.

In 2003-04, a committee with members from OLIS, RI.gov, and the Secretary of State’s office reviewed Find-It for possible enhancement or replacement.

In 2004-05, OLIS staff added a blog—Rhodarian Library News and Information with a Rhode Island Accent—to the site. The blog serves as a forum where OLIS staff can post items from local library news to resources and information as well as comment on other posts. Using the blog’s RSS feed, Rhodarian headlines are fed onto the OLIS home page, which has helped publicize the blog and gain readership.

Assessment

Many, but not all of the programs and initiatives listed above are directly associated with Library of Rhode Island (LORI). However, the evaluators are convinced that the creation and continued care and feeding of LORI is essential to

Rhode Island's success in "creating a digital information environment" in the State. LORI isn't a single program, it is the glue that holds the other programs together and that molds them into a coherent whole.

Although some of the programs and initiatives described above are stronger than others, Rhode Island has done a wonderful job in creating a supportive environment within which resource sharing can grow and expand. There is still much work to be done. There are many libraries that are still not part of LORI. Rhode Island lacks the universal access to electronic databases that exists in some other states. There are still multiple library automation systems. Nevertheless, LORI provides the common ground on which all types of libraries can build a seamless network of library and information services that will serve the public well.

Although much work remains to be done, Rhode Island has accomplished great things and is meeting Objective 2.A.

Evidence of Success

The enthusiastic participation of so many libraries of all types in LORI speaks volumes about the initiative's success. Resource sharing capacity is growing as more libraries are joining major automation consortia and as efforts are made to provide better access to holdings across the various systems.

Objective 2.B: Maintain and extend effective library and information services for users by providing library staff with training and support.

Much of what happens under this objective is largely invisible to the casual observer. Coordination of continuing education events happens in the background and few may realize that such coordination has taken place. Specific continuing education offerings may seem significant only to those who are participating in them. A contact between a library director and an OLIS staff consultant about a particular problem may be visible only to the individual receiving the assistance. Nevertheless, these services are important in the overall health of library services in the State. LSTA dollars help support many of these library development activities.

Continuing Education

Continuing education is an integral part of OLIS's efforts to increase the competencies of staff members in Rhode Island libraries and to explore emerging professional issues. During this period, CE programs were primarily designed to provide professional development in children's services, youth services, reference, planning, customer service, management, public relations, library development, and technology.

Activities

In 2003, in order to assure breadth of scope in programming, OLIS formed a multidisciplinary team with staff from library development, network and web services, blind and physically handicapped services, and management.

Presenters included staff from Rhode Island and other New England libraries, OLIS staff, and some from outside the library community with expertise in a specific topic. Continuing education opportunities were held in libraries throughout Rhode Island. Some CE programs were broadcast, using video over IP, to other libraries.

Through a partnership between OLIS and the Providence Public Library, Microsoft Office software classes were primarily taught by staff from the Library. State funding for the statewide reference resource was used to support the program, through which OLIS was able to offer a broader spectrum of programming without expending additional LSTA funds.

Outputs

In 2003, OLIS developed policies and practices for regular continuing education, including the trimester schedule.

In 2004, OLIS staff attended professional development in web and database development, working with the visually-impaired community, customer service, and skills for providing services to libraries.

Chart 6 reports the number of continuing education events and attendance by type of library.

Chart 6: Continuing Education Participation	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
Continuing Education events	66	51	50
Attendance: Public Libraries	508	511	503
Attendance: School Library Media Centers	160	109	131
Attendance: Academic Libraries	30	59	32
Attendance: Special Libraries	56	41	45
Attendance: Other	140	19	34
Total Attendance	894	839	745

Outcomes

In the online survey, librarians rated continuing education programs 4.02 out of 5.0. They agreed with the statement “Continuing education for librarians/library staff has improved in the last five years” (3.92 out of 5.0) and more weakly agreed that “OLIS continuing education opportunities available to me/my staff are adequate to meet my/their needs” (3.73 out of 5.0).

Librarians interviewed for the evaluation complimented recent continuing education efforts:

“OLIS has become a greater leader in technology [with their] workshops on web development, etc.”

Focus group participants from all types of libraries rated continuing education very important and felt it had improved:

“CE has really improved in the last five years. They’ve really put a push on it.”

“We have a full day in the spring, a really wonderful day in March. Last year we had Michael Sullivan. Teachers came too and were able to get CE credit.”

“OLIS raises standards really high for us; I don’t know where we’d get the workshops that we’ve had with Melody and Frank.”

“I wouldn’t have been able to do lots of the programs without professional development support.”

“OLIS runs a very good continuing education program, mostly computer related classes, open to all types of librarians.”

Some public library directors felt that some sort of continuing education requirements for professionals would be useful.

When interviewees and focus group participants were asked about priorities for the next LSTA Plan, they included continuing education. In particular, they suggested:

- Focusing on topics of concern in their communities, including
 - Early literacy. They pointed out that it’s a “national thing.”
 - Teen and tween audiences
 - Economic development
 - Community value—“What we really do for our communities.”

- Funding long-term professional development, with ongoing support during implementation

Some of the continuing education for librarianship that occurs in Rhode Island is reported on elsewhere. For example, emergent literacy training was included in the section on services to youth. The “library futures” conference is included later in this section of the report.

In the interview with the OLIS CE Team, members felt that establishing procedures, timeline and a budget for CE was one major accomplishment. Another was the online CE survey that takes 10 minutes to complete and is compiled automatically. They reported that librarians want more technology and customer service training.

They felt that providing training related to using technology to offer services to people with disabilities was a need. Information regarding best practices in programming is also a challenge.

The OLIS CE Team saw the development of online training, working more closely with the University of Rhode Island library school, and addressing the needs of trustees and support staff as opportunities in the future.

Consulting, Field Service Visits, Professional Collection

Activities

Field Service Visits

Through field service visits, OLIS Library Services staff determined compliance with public library standards.

Reference Round Table

OLIS staff hosted Reference Round Table discussions.

Professional Collection

The OLIS professional collection supported information and research in the field of library and information science. Its primary clientele were library staff and graduate students in library science, as well as legislative staff and state employees in the Departments of Administration, Health, and Transportation.

Consultation

OLIS staff responded to requests for information on a wide range of topics related to library development, policies, funding, and services.

Outputs

Field service visits, round table sessions, and professional collection users are totaled in Chart 7.

Chart 7: Continuing Education and Consultation	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
Formal Field service visits	38	28	10
Reference Round Table sessions	3	3	2
Reference Round Table participants	45	29	10
Young Adult Round Table sessions	11	11	11
Young Adult Round Table participants	200	199	173
OLIS library collection users	112	107	107
OLIS library reading room users	424	459	459
OLIS library Internet users	968	662	662

Outcomes

In the online survey, librarians agreed (4.21 out of 5.0) with the statement “Public library standards are an important tool for improving library service...” On the same survey, they rated support for conferences 3.93 out of 5.0 and consulting services for public libraries 3.54 out of 5.0, the lowest of any service rating. They weakly agreed (3.46 out of 5.0) with the statement “The professional collection at OLIS is heavily used.”

They were in weak agreement (3.63 out of 5.0) that “Staffing levels at OLIS are inadequate to carry out current programs and responsibilities.”

Participants in the focus groups for public library directors, children’s and youth services, school librarians, and academic libraries mentioned using the professional collection:

“All the professional materials we get come from the professional library; we don’t buy a \$35 reference for our own collections. Having someone at the state level keeping up with that is important.”

One questioned whether OLIS’s professional collection was necessary and another mentioned difficulty in visiting the professional library site:

“Maybe they don’t need the professional library. Maybe they could drop that and work with the URI graduate program, HELIN, and CLAN.”

“Their location is a lot more difficult to get to use the professional literature.”

Focus group participants described the consulting support they had received:

“...Being able to call and say ‘Can you give me an idea where to go?’ is very important.”

“The last few months they’ve been a wealth of information to me as a new director... They make it easier to do what we do.”

Assessment

The continuing education and support activities of the Office of Library and Information Services are limited by the availability of staff. While reports from the field are generally positive, some library development activities have been curtailed in recent years because of the increased cost of gasoline, a move of OLIS offices, and restrictions on State spending.

Nevertheless continuing education and a highly professional OLIS staff are essential components in securing the future of library and information services in the State. OLIS probably needs to look more closely at ways to leverage LSTA dollars to accomplish more in the way of continuing education through contracts with online providers and professional trainers. At the same time, it needs to examine ways to increase the number of formal field visits it makes to libraries throughout the State.

OLIS is meeting Objective 2.B., but lacks to capacity to excel in this area.

Evidence of Success

Most of the evidence of success in meeting this objective is related to continuing education efforts.

GOAL 3: *Increase public awareness of the intrinsic value of libraries in promoting personal and economic growth for every resident in every community through the wide array of programs and services that libraries offer.*

The evaluators believe that Rhode Island has made some progress toward this goal but that a great deal of additional work remains to be done.

Objective 3.A: Increase the amount and availability of information on library services and programs within Rhode Island so that more individuals can take advantage of these.

The evaluators believe that this objective has received the least attention of any of the seven objective included in the 2003 – 2007 Five-Year LSTA Plan.

Rhode Island Center for the Book

Activities

The Rhode Island Center for the Book was launched in 2002 by the Providence Public Library, which supported it during its founding period. Now in its third year, the Center is a statewide organization with an elected board of directors drawn from diverse constituencies including librarians, booksellers, printers, authors, literacy specialists, publishers, bookbinders, teachers, and book enthusiasts of all sorts. OLIS has an ex officio seat on the board. A VISTA-paid staff person facilitated planning, whose travel was partially supported through the LSTA funds.

The Center sponsored the popular “One State, One Book” program called Reading Across Rhode Island and was the architect of BookLinks (www.ribook.org/booklinks), an online guide to reading, writing, making, and sharing books.

The Center also sponsored an annual essay-writing contest for RI students called “Letters About Literature.” Children in grades 4 through 12 are invited to participate in the program; winners were honored at the Center’s annual meeting, which also featured a talk by distinguished author and illustrator David Macaulay, a Rhode Island resident.

The Center also partnered with the Providence Athenaeum, the John Russell Bartlett Society, the New England Chapter of the American Printing History Association, and the Friends of the Library at Brown University in sponsoring a

lecture on 19th century bookbinding by expert Sue Allen. Accompanying exhibits were mounted at the Athenaeum and the Brown University John Hay Library.

The Center sent two representatives to Washington DC for the National Book Festival and sponsored a table at the Festival's Pavilion of the States.

Assessment

Perhaps the greatest progress that OLIS has made toward this objective comes in the form of an improved OLIS web presence. Although the reinvention and redesign of the OLIS website actually fits best under Objective 2.A., the site is particularly well conceived and has been designed to support future enhancements. While much of the public is unaware of the site, it is a rich resource for the library community. Unfortunately, it appears that the Rhodarian blog has not yet captured a wide audience. However, its establishment is a good indication that OLIS understands that communications methods are changing. A further sign of this is the incorporation of RSS feed capability, which could be used to reach a wider audience than library staff.

Rhode Island has also done a reasonably good job of communicating with targeted audiences such as the users of Talking Books Plus. The state library agency's involvement with the Center for the Book is also a positive attempt to increase public awareness of books, reading, and libraries. Nevertheless, much work remains to be done in raising the public's awareness of the availability of relevant library and information services.

Much work remains to be done in reaching Objective 3.A.

Evidence of Success

As was noted above, the redesigned OLIS web site is probably the primary sign of success in regard to Objective 3.A.

Objective 3.B: Create a collective vision for library and museum services in Rhode Island.

OLIS has undertaken a number of efforts to involve the Rhode Island Library community in thinking about the future of libraries. One of these was mentioned repeatedly by librarians in the State during the evaluation process. "Navigating the Future of Libraries: A Rhode Map" was a day-long conference designed to showcase forward-looking models for library services and technical innovation for an audience of more than 200 Rhode Island library directors, staffs, and board members from all types of libraries. Planned and organized by the LORI Committee, the conference was seen by many as an important event in changing the way people think about library services.

Work in this vein has continued with the formation of a “LibFutures Committee” that has worked to build consensus on goals and activities for statewide library development. The involvement of representatives from libraries of all types in charting a course for Rhode Island is very positive.

Assessment

A focus on the future of library services provides a positive context for librarians from all types of libraries to collaborate and cooperate without raising some of the turf battles that are associated with existing services. Ongoing discussion regarding the future of library services also provides OLIS with valuable input on which to base decisions regarding the use of LSTA and State funding.

Most librarians interviewed or participating in focus groups felt that OLIS’s “futures” efforts were valuable and should be continued:

“The Library Futures planning is important. OLIS should really be building on this.”

Although a great deal of work remains to be done in creating a collective vision for the future of library and museum services in Rhode Island, OLIS has taken some preliminary steps that appear to be very promising. Rhode Island is making progress toward Objective 3.B.

Evidence of Success

An obvious evidence of success is that many in the Rhode Island library community want OLIS to continue to foster future thinking through conferences and through support of committees, the facilitation of discussion through meetings and electronic means. Another evidence of success that the evaluators encountered is an unusually high level of awareness on the part of librarians from libraries of one type of the challenges faced by other types of libraries. Academic librarians seem to have a greater understanding of challenges facing public libraries. Public librarians seem to be more aware of what is occurring in school libraries and school library/media specialists are more engaged with the library community as a whole. We believe that much of this is a result of activities related to the LORI initiative; however, we suspect that some of this understanding is related to “futures” activities as well.

III. Results of In-depth Evaluation

OLIS chose the **Talking Books Plus** program as the focus of the in-depth evaluation. Sources of data for the evaluation included:

- Annual LSTA reports and other documents provided by OLIS
- Annual survey of users, conducted by the Talking Books staff
- Phone interviews of Talking Book users conducted by Himmel & Wilson
- Interviews and focus groups with librarians from all types of libraries by Himmel & Wilson
- Anecdotal information, including comments collected by the Talking Books staff, notes accompanying donations to the Talking Books program, and letters from Talking Books users and their families

Target Audiences

Ascertaining the actual number of people with vision impairments and other physical disabilities in Rhode Island is difficult. One source of information is the *2000 U.S. Census*, in which people reported if they had “blindness, deafness, severe vision or hearing impairment.” The total for Rhode Island was 34,153, a number which included both vision and hearing loss. The total included 1,400 children between age 5 and 15, 13,595 individuals from 16 through 64, and 19,158 people aged 65 and older.

Another source of data about the number of people with vision impairment is PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA, which issued a report titled *Vision Problems in the U.S.* in 2002, based on data from leading ophthalmic epidemiologists. This study estimated that the number of individuals age 40 and over in Rhode Island having a vision impairment (including blindness) is 16,018.

In Rhode Island, 8,450 individuals (about half the adult cases predicted by the *Vision Problems* report) are registered with the state as blind or visually impaired. Of the 8,450 individuals, 456 are children under 15.

Activities

During the three years covered by this evaluation (FY 2003 – FY 2005), OLIS contracted with Perkins’ Braille and Talking Books Library to maintain and loan talking books and Braille books to Rhode Island residents who are eligible for the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped program. In addition, OLIS provided readers’ advisory service, reference and referral services, and access to large print materials and descriptive videos either directly or through a grant awarded to the East Providence Public Library. The East Providence Public Library adds large print materials to the Cooperating Libraries Automated Network (CLAN) and provides mail services to homebound users throughout the State. Descriptive videos are supplied by the Lincoln Public Library.

OLIS coordinates the entire program and unifies it through the Talking Books Plus website. A cooperative approach to offering direct services can be a challenge; however, it appears that OLIS has been very effective in creating a service that is seen as a coherent whole in spite of the fact that various service elements are provided by different organizations. The Talking Books Plus program also illustrates the degree to which different aspects of Rhode Island’s LSTA plan are integrated. In addition to supporting direct services, LSTA funds have been used to purchase a “Homebound Module” for the CLAN automation system that is used to access large print materials.

OLIS publishes a quarterly newsletter (now also online) to promote the various services and keep users informed. OLIS also maintains a web site for the public and libraries with talking book and other disabilities-related information and makes presentations on services at sites such as nursing homes and social service agencies.

The Talking Book Plus program has also attempted to create opportunities for people with disabilities to fully participate in programs that are offered to the general public. As case in point is the fact that children registered with Talking Books Plus service were invited to participate in the statewide Summer Reading Program. In 2006, 163 children registered; 186 children and 60 adults attended a performance sponsored by OLIS.

Outputs

In 2003-04, more than 2,000 residents had registered for the Talking Books Plus Program; by 2004-05, the number had increased to 2,300. Chart 8 summarizes user statistics.

Chart 8: Talking Books Plus	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
Talking Books users registered	1,817	2,035	2,313
Braille users registered	46	50	39
Large Print Users registered	47	75	72
Talking Books borrowed	50,078	56,990	60,000
Braille Books borrowed	403	639	289
Large Print Books borrowed	1,261	1,385	781
Descriptive videos borrowed	100	250	109

Outcomes

Annual survey of patrons

In February 2006, Talking Books staff sent a print survey to 1,817 Talking Book patrons, in order to measure the level of satisfaction with service and discover how many patrons used computers. Two hundred fifty surveys were returned, a return rate of 13.75 percent. The 94 percent of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied. Those who were somewhat satisfied indicated that that quality of recorded tapes and the speed of service were disappointing. Among those who responded, 57 percent own or have access to a computer. Of those, 93 percent have access to the Internet. NLS, using new technology, is testing downloading of talking books. The ability to download will depend on the power of their Internet connection. Despite the high percentage of Internet users among patrons of Talking Books, two-thirds still request their recorded books by phone or mail.

The staff will address problems identified through the survey by communicating problems with the speed of service to the book mailers as well as identify ways to speed up the process in-house. The change to digital books in 2008 should start helping with the quality of the book, although the format will be changing to digital. Machines will be similar, but use of memory sticks large enough to hold entire books should make the experience more pleasant. It will be a challenge, however, to OLIS's older patrons. The next survey (in 2007) will gather information on individual access in an attempt to identify the degree of patron satisfaction, indicate how many patrons have use of a computer, indicate who has access to the Internet and how, and determine how many patrons use assistive technology.

Knowing this information will help OLIS determine who will be ready for the digital talking books when they are ready for downloading from the National Library Service. It may also help OLIS set up a triage for distributing the limited digital talking book and talking book machines when they roll off the assembly line in 2008. A future survey, to be distributed later this year, will further identify the degree to which OLIS's patrons are connected to the Internet.

Phone interviews with Talking Books patrons

In late 2006, Himmel & Wilson conducted phone interviews with five Talking Books patrons. Those interviewed were:

- Joy Dennis, 62, has used the service for more than 50 years. She learned about it from a social worker. She is a retired English professor who likes to read poetry, literature, drama.
- Beatrice Miller, 93, has macular degeneration and has used the service for three years. She learned about it through a speech by OLIS staff member Andy Egan at InSight (a Rhode Island based non-profit agency serving the Blind and visually impaired). She likes to read about families.

- Frederick A. Rounds, 73, has used the service for 35 years. He reads “everything except westerns and science fiction,” and especially likes mysteries.
- Aleatha Dickerson, 53, learned about the service from her sister and has used it since 1988. She is a rehabilitation teacher and promotes Talking Books to her students.
- Suresh Ramamurthy, 35, learned about Talking Books at vocational rehabilitation. He has used the service for 16 years and reads mainly non-fiction.

According to the interviewees, the best features about the service are:

- Excellent, personal service
- Collections
- Online access to the collections
- Response time is getting faster

Areas for improvement suggested by interviewees:

- Poor quality of some tapes
- Not enough non-fiction titles
- Requesting a title for recording.

The interviewees were well informed. They were aware of the fact that NLS is moving toward a digital format. Some are positive about the change but others are a bit worried that adjusting to the new format will be challenging. Comment regarding the move to the digital format included:

“I have no objection to the change as long as the new technology is easy to use and reliable.”

“Everything is in flux right now. NLS has moved to a different digital format than Recordings for the Blind & Dyslexic. I don’t understand how the NLS player will work. I’m afraid the flash memory cards will get lost in the mail.”

Online survey of librarians

Librarians in the State seemed to be somewhat less aware of the full scope of the Talking Book Plus program. On the web survey conducted by the evaluators, librarians rated Talking Books Plus just under four (3.98) on a five-point scale. Survey respondents were asked to rate a variety of services in regard to the degree to which they were addressing the needs of Rhode Island libraries and residents. A rating of 1 equated to “very poorly” while a rating of 5 represented “very well.”

Several other programs (the Library of Rhode Island [LORI], the Summer Reading Program, and Literacy Services) fared considerably better than Talking Books Plus (4.59, 4.53, and 4.21 respectively). Furthermore only 41 of 98 survey respondents chose to answer the question indicating that many were uncomfortable rating the service because they lacked the first-hand knowledge necessary to form an opinion. This may indicate that a greater effort needs to be made to inform librarians in the State about the program.

Interviews and focus groups with librarians

In interviews with librarians, one identified Talking Books as one of two most important programs for her library. She said:

“Talking Books is solid. It’s fabulous!”

In the public and academic library focus groups, participants commented favorably on the Talking Books Plus service:

“Talking Books Plus is a wonderful service. I’m in a small library and I refer people to them all the time.”

“They’re getting even better service now that OLIS isn’t doing it themselves. They’ve outsourced it and they coordinate the program.”

Anecdotal information

Excerpts from many users underscore the importance of the program to many individuals.

“Thanks to all of you for helping to make Jane’s days a little easier to deal with. She believes that she’s probably your best customer, and she promises to keep you busy!”

“[You] have been extremely helpful and kind to me at Talking Books, now that I cannot read. You understand how important a supply of books and some periodicals is, and I wish to comment on your patience, literary perception, and compassion.”

“I called last Monday to get my password and IF to access the library collection. You helped me through the OPAC site and I want to thank you for your patience and for taking time to do that with me. I had been an avid reader all my life and despaired that I would ever experience the pleasure of a ‘good book’ again...”

The Talking Books Plus service is a strong program that is greatly appreciated by end users. OLIS has taken the initiative to try to make it as strong as possible through actions such as outsourcing portions of the service, collaborating with other libraries for special services (e.g., large print, descriptive videos), and by reaching out to program users (summer reading program for children enrolled in the Talking Books Plus program).

The evaluators would cite two weaknesses of the program. The first is a relatively low level of awareness of the program among librarians in the State. It appears that OLIS does a good job of communicating with users and potential users but not as effective a job of promoting the program with local library personnel. The second weakness is the growing dependence of the program on LSTA funding. Between FY 2003 and FY 2005, the amount of LSTA funding directed toward the program more than doubled from \$192,232 to \$392,844. During that time, the percentage of the LSTA allotment spent on the program increased from 23.33% of the LSTA allotment (FY 2003) to 38.50% of the total LSTA funds available (FY 2005). While the Talking Books Plus program is obviously an important one that directly relates to the LSTA purposes, the expenditure of a large percentage of LSTA funding on a single ongoing program limits the availability to funds for innovative purposes. OLIS needs to work with State government and with potential private partners to secure other dependable streams of funding for the program.

IV. Progress in Showing Results of Library Initiatives or Services – Use of Outcome-Based Evaluation

Progress in Outcomes-based Evaluation

Rhode Island has worked diligently to build a better understanding of outcome-based evaluation (OBE) and to incorporate OBE into some of its LSTA funded initiatives. In February 2001, three OLIS staff members attended OBE training at the IMLS offices. In October 2001, OLIS hosted an OBE workshop. Strengthening Outcomes for Rhode Island Libraries, which was sponsored by IMLS. This workshop was attended by four OLIS staff as well as by 23 staff from libraries throughout the state. In October 2002, two OLIS staff members attended OBE training presented as part of the COSLINE annual library development workshop. All sessions were taught by Claudia Horn, part of Alliance Group (later with Performance Results), and Karen Motylewski, of IMLS.

Both of Rhode Island's LSTA subgrant programs, Public Library Literacy and LORI, have incorporated OBE requirements into the applications. Applicants are instructed that monitoring and evaluation are critical components of any grant application. The application includes definitions for evaluation and OBE terminology and a link to the IMLS OBE resources web page.

The initial effort involved the collection of outcomes statements from families and children who participated in the Summer Reading Program. Children's librarians from across Rhode Island also contributed one or two statements about the impact of the program on children who participated in their libraries. Roughly two-thirds of the statements were judged as relevant to OBE, while one-third failed to meet that definition, demonstrating a continued need to train local librarians in understanding OBE and assessing outcomes.

OLIS has taken a rather conservative approach to implementing OBE in the State. They have, not surprisingly, targeted programs that are most closely connected to end-users for the application of OBE principles. These include the Summer Reading Program, emergent literacy efforts, and adult and family literacy initiatives. OLIS selected the Public Library Adult Literacy program for closer examination in regard to progress in outcome-based evaluation.

Public Library Adult Literacy Programs

The purpose of the Public Library Adult Literacy Grant Program is to fund library projects that benefit adult literacy learners through the public library. Projects that exhibit strong partnerships with the literacy community receive highest priority. Projects that involve collaboration involving more than one library and innovative projects also receive high priority. Grant applications are made available to all public libraries in the state. An evaluation team, composed of members of the adult education community, act as reviewers.

Two grants were awarded in each of the three years covered by the evaluation. The same two libraries, the Coventry Public Library and the Providence Public Library received grants in each of those years.

Coventry Public Library (\$5,130 in FY 2003, \$ 8,346 in FY 2004, and, \$ 9,915 in FY 2005)

The Coventry Public Library partnered with Literacy Volunteers of America-Kent County (LVKC), an affiliate of ProLiteracy America, using learner-centered techniques including the Learning Experience Approach, Whole Language, and Competency-based Instruction. Tutoring was free and confidential. Recruitment and training of new tutors was the priority for this year.

Activities

The program has recruited and trained tutors and has offered basic literacy and English as a Second Language services. Students waiting for tutors are placed in a small group program called Start Here, which introduces potential students to the library and its services.

Outputs

Summary data for the Coventry Public Library program are presented in Chart 9.

Chart 9: Public Library Literacy: Coventry Public Library Outputs	FY 2003	FY 2004	FY 2005
Tutors active	17	71	63
Tutors recruited	100	94	90
Tutors completing training	28	34	24
Tutor training workshops held (each 18 hours)	4	4	4
Students served	74	88	77
Student retention rate	NA	82%	82%
Students pre-tested	41	76	36
Students post-tested	39	44	44
Potential students on waiting list	30-40	22	14

Outcomes Tracked.

The program has started tracking a variety of outcomes that have occurred because of participation in the program. They include changes in attitude, changes in knowledge and skills, changes in behavior, and changes in condition

Following is a list of some of the outcomes that are being tracked:

- Completing an Education Function Level (as defined by the National Reporting standards)
- Obtaining a library card
- Obtaining a driver's license
- Purchasing a vehicle
- Writing a resume
- Completing a job application
- Receiving a green card
- Obtaining employment
- Writing a poem
- Enrolling in or completing a job training course
- Becoming a citizen
- Registering to vote and voting
- Reading to a child for the first time
- Increasing involvement in their child's education
- Increasing involvement in their community

While the outcome-based evaluation that is being applied in this program is not sophisticated, nevertheless, it gets to the heart of the question of "What has changed because of the program/initiative?"

There is also a great deal of anecdotal information that supports the importance of this program. For example, students wrote:

"Thanks a lot for your help! I really enjoy your English classes. Today, one of my co-workers told me that he noticed a lot of improvement in my pronunciation. I wanted to share that good news with you. You are part of this achievement."

"When I came to literacy class, I was in tough shape. I couldn't speak, read, or write. I tried for two years to read and spell. I just couldn't learn. When my tutor came into the picture, we seemed to click. I learned so much from her. She is very patient, understanding, and intelligent. Now I can read, write, spell, and speak. A whole new world has opened unto me. Now I can do things for myself that I couldn't do before. My goal now is to help other people who are illiterate."

Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative (\$41,777 in FY 2003, \$61,654 in FY 2004, and, \$60,085 in FY 2005)

The Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative is a collaborative effort of public libraries statewide to provide first-step English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) literacy programs for families. Although the program is based at the Providence Public Library, five participating public library systems selected library locations to encourage learning in the neighborhoods of families in need of literacy programming.

Objectives were to increase the number of families in the program, improve literacy levels of 80 percent of learners, teach computer literacy, increase learner library loans, and increase referrals of learners who completed the project to more advanced literacy programs.

Activities

The program provides classes for beginning and intermediate learners. Beginning learners are introduced to basic vocabulary and survival language while intermediate learners work on vocabulary development, writing, grammar, and conversation. Civics instruction and basic computer training have now been added to the program as well. The program is also active in referring students to health, legal, employment, and other social services.

Outputs

Chart 10 on the next page reports outputs for the RIFLI program.

Chart 10 : Rhode Island Family Literacy Program: Outputs	<i>FY 2003 July 02- June 03</i>	<i>FY 2004 July 03- June 04</i>	<i>FY 2005</i>	<i>FY 2006</i>
Adults enrolled	754	879	809	300 (unduplicated)
Children enrolled	221	337	294	231
Families enrolled	228	223	278	156
Retention rate	84%	88%	86%	79%
Waiting list at end of year	109	181	158	81
Number of Classes	41	47	56	48
Percent of literacy students introduced to computers and computer literacy	100%	100%	100%	99%
Percent of literacy students participating in other library programs—computer classes, story hours, etc.	23%	28%	41%	54%
Library cards issued to literacy students	331	360	401	154
Materials circulated to literacy students	6,850	10,307	8,948	8,455
Number of literacy students referred to more intensive literacy programs	42	58	24	102

Outcomes

The RIFLI program has been tracking outcomes similar to those reported in the section above about the Coventry Public Library program. Some of the outcomes are impressive. For example, in 2005, 23 students were working on achieving citizenship and 14 actually became citizens.

Again, there is a great deal of anecdotal information that underscores both the need for adult literacy services and the impact of the services offered through RIFLI.

One story demonstrated the power of the program: When the student joined the program, she was working in a factory despite having a university degree and more than ten years experience in human resources. Because her English was limited, she thought she would never be able to leave the factory. The small group in the library family literacy program gave her the confidence to look for a better job. She got a job as a receptionist in a dentist's office and started volunteering at

the library, where she tutors the beginning group. Later, she landed a job as a human resources manager for a large supermarket chain in an area with many Spanish speakers. Her daughter is now a teenager and volunteers every Saturday at the library.

Conclusion

As is illustrated above, the LSTA-funded literacy initiatives in Rhode Island are still heavily dependent on output and on anecdotal information. While both of these methods of evaluating programs have their place, they are often not as effective or compelling as outcome-based assessment.

Rhode Island's efforts to implement outcome-based evaluation in their literacy and youth services efforts to date have been rudimentary. Nevertheless, they do represent progress. OLIS has considered OBE and has attempted to find ways to incorporate it into programs that provide direct services. This approach, while representing a cautious path, is sensible as well.

Although many states have done less than Rhode Island in integrating OBE into their LSTA program, some others have achieved significantly more. Among the COSLINE states, Maryland has done a particularly good job of getting their public library community to think in terms of outcomes. Rhode Island would do well to explore the actions that Maryland and other states that have placed a higher priority on implementing OBE have made. The groundwork has already been laid in Rhode Island. The time has come to build upon it. The development of the next five-year LSTA plan provides an exceptionally good opportunity to create an outcome-based framework for evaluation.

V. Lessons Learned

The Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services (OLIS) has done an admirable job of building the State's diverse library community into a coherent whole. In the opinion of the evaluators, the Library of Rhode Island (LORI) program is exemplary. OLIS has, with a relatively small amount of LSTA funding, created a common ground for libraries of all types to cooperate and to share resources.

A quick review of the delivery schedule for LORI certified libraries reveals 74 stops at public libraries and public library branches, 60 stops at schools, 19 stops at academic libraries, 15 stops at special libraries, 4 stops at state agencies/libraries, and 1 stop at a correctional facility. The participation of such a diverse group of libraries in a single service is dramatic. What is even more dramatic is the underpinning of the LORI program: LORI certification.

By using access to a set of desirable services as an incentive and the certification process as the admission ticket, Rhode Island has created a library network that functions at a high level and that presents many opportunities for libraries to cooperate in ways that go well beyond the parameters of the LORI structure. The evaluators have reprinted the LORI certification form below:

1. Library Operations

Please check "Yes" for each standard/condition that your library meets:

A Library of Rhode Island (LORI) member library will:

1.1. operate in compliance with [RI law](#). Yes No

1.2. have an [organized](#) collection of information resources Yes No

1.3. have [on file](#) with the Office of Library & Information Services (OLIS) a current copy of the [library mission statement](#) that has been approved by the library's governing body

Yes

Mission Statement is enclosed with the signed Certification Form

Mission Statement **has been sent** as an attachment to email (standards@olis.ri.gov)

No

1.4. have [on file](#) with OLIS a written [library policy\(s\)](#) that has been approved by the [library's governing body](#), which defines:

1.4.1. the library's primary clientele,

1.4.2. the extent to which others may have access to the library and its services,

1.4.3. the types and scope of services the library offers.

Yes

relevant policies are enclosed with the signed Certification Form

relevant policies **have been sent** as attachments to email (standards@olis.ri.gov)

No

1.5. have a [fixed location](#) (or locations). Yes No

1.6. have [regular hours](#) of service. Yes No

1.7. have a qualified paid staff to manage the collection and provide access to it, with a minimum of one staff member holding a Master degree of Library and Information Services from an ALA accredited school.

Yes

No

1.8. provide reference service and loan library materials and equipment to its patrons without fees.

Yes

No

2. Electronic Access

2.1. A LORI library will have bibliographic and holdings information that can be accessed through the Internet.

2.1.1. A library not in compliance with 2.1 must submit a plan to provide Internet access to bibliographic and holdings information within 18 months from the date of its application for LORI membership.

- Yes Here is the address/URL of the library catalog:
- library is **not** in compliance with 2.1.but a compliance plan is enclosed
- No, The holdings are not available and we do not have a plan for making them available

2.2. If a LORI library's serials holdings are listed in electronic format, then the library should provide access to the list through the Internet.

The serials holdings list --

- are in electronic format and here is the URL:
- are in electronic format but are **not** available on the Internet
- are not in electronic format

3. Communication

Each LORI library will designate staff members who will:

3.1. serve as the LORI Liaison who will

3.1.1. inform OLIS of personnel changes in the positions of LORI Liaison and ILL Contact;

3.1.2. have the training and Internet access necessary to communicate with OLIS by email;

3.1.3. keep apprised of information distributed by OLIS through the LORI website and email and communicate such information to appropriate staff.

- Yes, there is a LORI Liaison
- No, there is no LORI liaison

3.2. serve as the ILL Contact who will

3.2.1. have the training and Internet access necessary to perform ILL tasks.

- Yes, there is a ILL Contact
 No , there is no ILL Contact

4. Interlibrary Loan

4.1. The LORI library director and the ILL Contact will sign the [ILL Agreement](#) established by OLIS for interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing.

- Yes -- a signed ILL Agreement is enclosed with the signed Certification Form
 No

4.2. A LORI library will adhere to the policies and procedures established by OLIS, which are based on the recommendations of the ILL Working Group, for interlibrary cooperation and resource sharing.

- Yes
 No

4.3. The LORI Liaison will report annually to OLIS the statistical information enumerated in the [ILL Code](#), § 8.0.

- Yes -- [Statistical Information Form](#) has been completed & submitted online
 No

5. [Technology Plan](#)

5.1. A LORI library will submit to OLIS a technology plan that:

- describes the library's strategy for using information technologies
- addresses its utilization of hardware and software
- demonstrates a commitment to staff development in information technology, and
- contains an evaluation process.

5.2. The Technology Plan will cover a 3-5 year span of time and should be reviewed annually. Yes No

The evaluators believe that Rhode Island's experience with the LORI program is well worth sharing with state library administrative agencies throughout the nation. OLIS has engaged the library community and has managed to create a program that has gained wide acceptance while at the same time increasing public access to quality library and information services.

LSTA funds in Rhode Island have been critically important in extending and integrating resource sharing efforts among different types of libraries. OLIS has leveraged improvements by investing relatively small amounts of LSTA funding to support delivery, consortial technology upgrades, and standards. These efforts expand access for library users and reduce duplication for libraries. Librarians in the state would like to take the next step; they are looking to OLIS to provide leadership, communication, and advocacy. On the web survey they agreed (4.04 out of 5.0) with the statement "OLIS should take a stronger leadership role."

LSTA funds have also contributed to the strong position OLIS holds in coordinating services for children and youth. Beginning with its Summer Reading and "Mother Goose Asks Why?" programs, OLIS has propelled services to a new level of professionalism. OLIS can help children's and youth librarians position themselves to lead community efforts in early literacy by continuing to shift its emphasis from direct service provision to capacity building through professional development.

Service to individuals with vision impairments is the third area in which OLIS has invested significant LSTA funds. Evidence suggests that service to this group has improved and the shift to digital technology over the next few years offers opportunities for further expansion of services and simplification of access.

Librarians agree that, with reduced staffing levels and a variety of constituencies and programs, OLIS needs to identify key priorities and focus on them, while selectively abandoning programs that have less impact or have other potential sources of support.

Finally, Rhode Island has done an excellent job of incorporating partnerships into its LSTA program. The evaluators have already reported that partnerships between and among various types libraries in the state is exemplary. However, OLIS has also sought and developed collaborative relationships with other kinds of organizations. Partnership relationships with museums, non-profit agencies, governmental agencies and businesses can be found throughout Rhode Island's LSTA program.

Recommendations

1. Continue to provide leadership for library futures planning, as a way of creating consensus about the direction of library services among all types of libraries, the services most needed from OLIS, and the highest priorities for funding (from local, State, Federal, and other sources).
2. Seek increased State and private investment in the Talking Books Plus program.
3. Develop a plan to increase awareness of the Talking Books Plus in the Rhode Island library community.
4. Develop a plan for long-term shared funding of delivery services (mix of State, local, and LSTA).
5. Investigate ways to build on the success of LORI to develop a broad-based database licensing consortium.
6. Focus on specific targeted user groups and research-based practices in professional development, rather than types of libraries or library audience, e.g., early literacy audiences (parents and caregivers), Spanish speakers, people with disabilities.
7. Work to encourage a unified statewide catalog that empowers users to do their own searching thereby increasing patron-initiated interlibrary loan and reducing the clearinghouse volume.
8. Use LSTA funding to build capacity of local libraries to support lifelong learning (rather than directly operating or funding long-term programs).
9. Expand outcomes-based evaluation to all OLIS programs. Early efforts demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of OBE concepts. Greater efforts should be made to build OBE into the next LSTA five-year plan and to stress the development of evaluation strategies as part of program design to ensure that data is regularly and reliably collected.
10. Continue exemplary efforts to integrate partnerships into LSTA-funded activities.

VI. Brief Description of Evaluation Process

Evaluation Methodology

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

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

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

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

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

The phases were:

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

Phase I: Discovery

State library liaison

The consultants scheduled a telephone conference call involving representatives of all six states on July 17th and asked that each state name a liaison to act as the primary point of contact between the consultants and their states' library agency. Donna DiMichele, Library Program Manager, and Beth Perry, Acting Chief of Library Services served as Rhode Island's liaisons.

State library questionnaire

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

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

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

Phone calls with State Library liaisons. Shortly after the conference phone call, the consultants called the state liaison to refine the list of background documents, to select focus group sites, and to begin to refine the calendar for each of the six states.

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

Phase II: Data/Information Gathering

Site visit to state library

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

- Beth Perry, Acting Chief of Library Services
- Donna Longo DiMichele, Library Program Manager/LORI Network Services Team
- Melody Allen, Children's Services/Field Services/CE Team
- Chaichin Chen, LORI Network Services Team/Web Team/Network Services Team
- Sheila Carlson, LORI Network Services Team/Web Team/Erate
- Karen Mellor, Construction Reimbursement/Web Team/CE Team
- Hope Houston, Talking Books Plus Readers' Advisor
- Andrew Egan, Talking Books Plus/CE Team
- Ann Piascik, Annual Report/Comparable Statistics/Literacy Grants/RIFLI Project
- Kelly Lima, ILL Clearinghouse/Delivery Supplies/LORI Network Services Team
- Alicia Waters, Delivery/LORI Network Services Team/Web Team

Development of data collection instruments

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

Focus groups

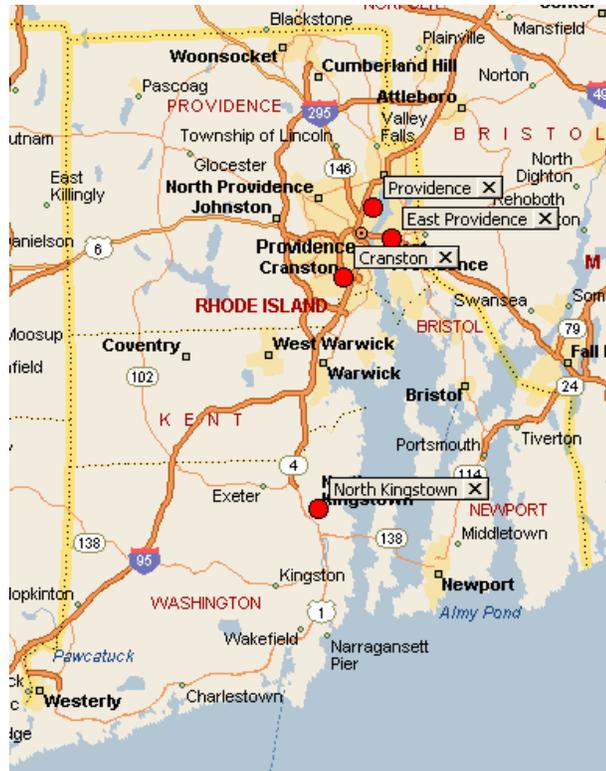
Ethel Himmel and Bill Wilson conducted five focus groups with a total of 43 participants from five target audiences:

- Public library directors (8)
- RIFLI Literacy Program teachers and students (11)
- Children's and youth services librarians (12)
- School librarians and RILINK (4)
- Academic and health science librarians (8)

Focus groups were held in the following locations:

- North Kingstown Free Library
- Rochambeau Branch, Providence Public Library
- Cranston Public Library (two sessions)
- East Providence Public Library

The following map (Map 1) shows the distribution of the focus groups in the State. Focus group sites are indicated by a red dot.



Map 1 – Focus Group Sites

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

Personal interviews were conducted via telephone with six Talking Book Service patrons. Interviewees were:

- Joy Dennis, Barrington
- Beatrice Miller, Warwick
- Frederick A. Rounds, Bristol
- Aleatha Dickerson, Providence
- Suresh Ramamurthy, Providence

Telephone interviews were also conducted with four library directors and one trustee. Directors interviewed were:

- Dale Thompson, Providence Public Library
- Debbie Barchi, Barrington Public Library
- Joan Prescott, Bristol Public Library
- Joan Ress Reeves, Library Board of Rhode Island
- Peter Deekle, Roger Williams University

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

Web-based surveys

Ninety-eight individuals responded to a web-based survey designed to gather responses to questions related to services and programs supported with LSTA funds in Rhode Island.

The largest percentage of respondents were from public libraries; school library media specialists made up the second largest group, followed by individuals working in four-year academic libraries. More than a third of the respondents were directors; school library media specialists were the second-largest group of respondents. Just under half of respondents worked in libraries with five or fewer FTE employees. Fifty percent of respondents reported materials budgets of \$50,000 or less.

A report on the web survey including response frequencies and open-ended comments are included in APPENDIX C.

Phase III: Data/Information Analysis

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

Phase IV: Synthesis

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

Phase V: Reporting

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

Responsibilities of Evaluation Team Members

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

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

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

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

Evaluation Team

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

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

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

Evaluation Costs

The following documents the total costs involved in the contract with Himmel & Wilson for conducting the LSTA evaluations for the six states that participated in the COSLINE shared evaluation effort. The six states shared equally in the evaluation costs. Therefore, Rhode Island's portion of the total evaluation budget was \$23,900.

Table 21: Evaluation Costs	
<i>Phase</i>	<i>Total</i>
I: Discovery	\$14,600
II: Data/Information Gathering	\$79,200
III: Data/Information Analysis	\$15,400
IV: Synthesis	\$7,200
V: Reporting	\$27,000
TOTAL	\$143,400

In addition to these costs, it is estimated that the Rhode Island Office of Library and Information Services staff devoted approximately 80 hours to the evaluation representing an investment of somewhere in the neighborhood of \$3,040 in Rhode Island's evaluation effort. In-kind contributions of communications, supplies, and other resources to the Rhode Island evaluation were an additional \$790.