

**READING FOR ALL:
EXTENDING PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES TO
DELAWAREANS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS –
A STRATEGIC PLAN (2008 – 2012)**

DELAWARE DIVISION OF LIBRARIES' VISION STATEMENT:

Delaware libraries 1st in the nation!

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Delaware Division of Libraries provides leadership and support that help Delaware's libraries connect the people of the First State with information and ideas that enlighten, inspire, and entertain!

How We Accomplish Our Mission:

We build collaborative relationships and maximize the impact of the resources available to libraries by applying outcome-based planning and pursuing operational excellence in order to enhance public access to information and ideas.

**THE DELAWARE DIVISION OF LIBRARIES'
OVERARCHING GOALS**

- To ensure equal access to information and ideas
- To promote literacy, lifelong learning, and the joy of reading
- To ensure a high return on the public's investment in libraries

INTRODUCTION

The Delaware Division of Libraries (DDL) strives to make a positive difference in the lives of the people of Delaware by working to ensure that every Delawarean has access to information resources that can enrich their lives. DDL cannot achieve this lofty goal on its own. Universal access to information resources can only be accomplished through active partnerships between and among DDL, local libraries, other local, state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, and civic-minded businesses.

The Delaware Division of Libraries works with libraries and other agencies throughout the State and nation on a daily basis in its effort to create a seamless network of information materials and services. Depending on the special needs and preferences of individuals, the information resources offered to Delawareans through libraries and their partner agencies may take traditional forms, such as books and periodicals printed on paper, or alternative media formats ranging from common audio and video formats to materials in Braille and downloadable digital formats. Still other information resources may take the form of reference and information services provided in libraries, programs offered in libraries and at other community sites, and virtual reference services offered by telephone or via the Internet.

The nature of the information that is offered also ranges widely. The resources provided can help individuals further their educational goals, can support business development and can facilitate civic discourse by providing information about important public issues. The resources provided can motivate children to become lifelong readers, can inspire

young adults to pursue a particular career path or can simply add to the quality of an individual's leisure time. Access to quality information resources are recognized as a powerful tool in developing and maintaining self-sufficiency.

Many residents of the State are able to satisfy most of their library and information needs through services offered by the local public libraries scattered throughout the State. However, some residents of the State of Delaware are unable to use print materials and other traditional library services because of a variety of handicapping conditions.

Services offered by DDL such as the Delaware Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (LBPH), which represents a partnership between the Library of Congress – National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) and the State, help fill this gap by making “talking books” and Braille materials available. Local libraries also contribute to making resources available to all by providing materials and services such as large print books, audio books, and, in a few cases, home delivery to the homebound. Nevertheless, these efforts fail to reach all who are eligible to receive the services and all who would benefit from them.

The following strategic plan is designed to address these important access issues and to ensure that all residents of Delaware, regardless of location, age, or handicapping condition, have access to quality library and information services.

BACKGROUND

The United States Census Bureau estimated Delaware's 2006 population to be 853,476. The University of Delaware's Center for Applied Demography and Survey Research projections indicate that the State's population will reach 913,312 by 2012 (the final year covered by this strategic plan) and will exceed 1 million people by the year 2023.

The 2000 U.S. Census revealed that 13% of Delaware's population was age 65 and older. While Delaware can be characterized as an "average" state in regard to the percentage of elderly population, this characteristic is changing. In fact, between the 1990 and 2000 Census, Delaware's 65+ population increased by 26%, which is a larger percentage increase than in any other state. This aging trend has continued over the past seven years as Delaware has continued to attract more and more retirees from other states. This fact is significant because many conditions that accompany aging (such as an increased incidence of visual impairments) affect the ability of individuals to use traditional print materials.

The 2000 U.S. Census estimated that 131,794 Delawareans of a total population for that year of 783,600 (16.8%) had some long-term disability (more than six months) that interfered with their mobility or their ability to work. The Census Bureau's 2005 American Community Survey reports that nearly 15% of all Americans have a disability that impairs their ability to see or hear or that limits their mobility. Even if this slightly lower estimate is applied, there are more

than 125,000 Delaware residents who are living with a long-term disability.

Fortunately, many of these individuals are able to (and do) use traditional library materials and services. However, many others cannot. The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) estimates that approximately 10 million Americans are blind or visually impaired. AFB estimates that 1.3 million Americans are legally blind. If percentages based on these estimates are applied to Delaware's population, we can surmise that somewhere around 28,000 Delawareans are visually impaired and that nearly 3,700 are legally blind. Many of these individuals (and many others with other conditions that limit their ability to use normal print resources) are eligible for service from the Delaware LBPH. Currently, just over 1,000 State residents are registered for Delaware's LBPH program. Clearly, many more could benefit from this program's services.

Furthermore, the NLS/LBPH program is about to shift from talking books on cassette tapes to a new digital talking book format using "flash-drive" technology. An extra effort will be required to help existing talking book users make the transition to this exciting new format.

Other technological advances over the past several decades have provided many new opportunities for individuals with a variety of disabling conditions to access information. While some of these technologies are affordable and readily available, some are not. Providing convenient access to technological tools ranging from simple CCTVs (Closed Circuit Television magnifiers) to sophisticated screen

readers such as JAWS™ software can make information far more accessible.

In preparing for the development of this strategic plan, contacts were made with numerous governmental agencies and non-profit organizations that provide advocacy and support services to individuals with special needs. The extent and range of services available is remarkable. However, there is no single source of information that ties these resources and organizations together.

People with disabilities often face challenges in regard to finding even basic information regarding a variety of services on topics ranging from health and housing to occupational training and recreational opportunities. While there are several separate directories of services, many exist only in print form and access to them is somewhat limited. Libraries can play an important role in assisting partner agencies in their efforts to organize and communicate the availability of services to a variety of target audiences.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POTENTIAL STRATEGIES

DDL is committed to operational excellence and recognizes that building a successful system for the delivery of information resources will require exceptional performance on a number of different fronts. While a constant focus on the end-user (customer) is essential, so too, is attention to other parts of the service delivery system.

DDL has identified six different categories or “perspectives” that are key elements of creating a model library and information

service system. Progress must be made in all areas in order to achieve DDL's overarching goals.

The six perspectives are:

- Customers,
- Products and Services,
- Organizational Effectiveness,
- Human Resources,
- Leadership and Governance, and
- Finances

The goals and objectives of the strategic plan are organized around these six perspectives. The goals and objectives that appear in this plan apply to all people whether or not they have a disability that impedes their use of traditional library resources and services. This is intended to underscore the fact that **all** people deserve high quality library and information services.

What differs in the plans are the strategies and actions that must be pursued to ensure that people with disabilities receive resources and services that are comparable to those offered to the balance of the population.

GOAL # 1 - CUSTOMERS

All residents of the State of Delaware will have convenient access to a wide range of relevant library and information services that enrich and improve their lives.

Objective 1.1. Build Customer Relationships

Potential Strategies

- Develop a system of routine phone contacts with LBPH customers (whether active or inactive).
Target: Documented direct contact with one-third of registered LBPH customers each year with documented contact with all within a three year span beginning in 2008 and running through 2010.
- Develop an enhanced LBPH customer/consumer survey that explores the relationship between the program and “Quality of life” issues. (Explore the Maine State Library’s Talking Books Plus program survey as an example.) Conduct survey annually starting in 2008.
- Develop a regular schedule of informational visits to local public libraries to promote LBPH services. Incorporate LBPH content into Delaware Division of Libraries visits centered around the “**Delaware Public Library Standards and Guidelines: A Blueprint for Success**” initiative. A rotating schedule of library visits will begin in 2008.
- Invite active LBPH customers to participate in the informational visits to local public libraries to promote the program (and make sure they are made aware of what their local library has to offer while they are there) Target at least one such

event in each County each year beginning in 2008.

- Provide customized (localized) information to customers of the LBPH program regarding services and resources available at their local public library. Explore the use of RSS feeds to inform LBPH program consumers of new services and programs. Explore in 2008 and, if determined to be desirable and feasible, begin service in 2009.
- Develop a “frequent reader” program to recognize avid participants in the LBPH program. Charge the Library for the Blind Consumer Advisory Council with the task of developing the frequent reader program. Discuss in 2008 and implement in 2009.
- Establish and build an online community of LBPH users (feature things like reviews from customers). Explore such a program in 2009 and, if deemed desirable and feasible, implement in 2010.
- Establish a relationship between users of large print materials in local libraries and the LBPH (LBPH large print bookmarks, posters in large print and audio book sections of libraries, etc.). Explore ways to underwrite the cost of bookmarks and posters in 2008. Acquire sponsorship for the program, develop materials, and implement in 2009. (Lions Clubs and the Delaware Lions Foundation are good potential sources for sponsorship.)
- Work with other agencies to get them to refer their clients to the LBPH program. Build on the

relationships with other State Agencies and with non-profit advocacy and support organizations that were established in the course of developing the strategic plan. Target: Annual contact with at least four State agencies and three non-profit organizations each year to discuss referrals to the LBPH program. Begin contacts in 2008.

- Enlist the assistance of technologically savvy individuals with disabilities to train others in using adaptive technologies that will be available in local libraries. Work with State agencies, with non-profit advocacy and support organizations and with the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative to identify potential volunteers. Seek funding to help defray volunteer expenses related to travel and expenses. Explore program in 2009 and implement in 2010.

Objective 1.2. Reduce Barriers to Customer Use Potential Strategies

- Redesign LBPH (and DDL) web presence to be more accessible (compliant with national guidelines for accessibility and usability). Establish contact with the Delaware Electronic Government Steering Committee and encourage the adoption of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Web Standards Project standards and initiatives related to accessibility. Review existing LBPH and DDL website design in 2008 and begin upgrading in 2009 with the target of a new, more accessible site in 2010.
- Assist local libraries in redesigning their web presence to comply with national accessibility and

usability guidelines. Explore Oregon's involvement in the "PLINKIT Consortium" (Public Library Interface Kit) and consider participation to encourage improved and more-accessible local library websites. Explore PLINKIT in 2008 and, if deemed desirable and feasible, implement in 2009.

- Ask persons with disabilities to help local libraries critique accessibility of facilities and services. Work with State agencies, with non-profit advocacy and support organizations to identify potential volunteers and the assistance of the agencies and organizations in carrying out the strategy. Seek funding to help defray volunteer expenses related to travel and expenses. Explore program in 2009 and implement in 2010.
- Ask other agencies that serve persons with disabilities to help local libraries critique accessibility of facilities and services. (see above) Explore program in 2009 and implement in 2010.
- Develop minimum guidelines for the availability of adaptive services and technologies available at local libraries and include them in the new service "blueprint" document (hierarchy of services and technologies available at anchor, regional, community libraries) Disseminate the guidelines in 2008 and work with libraries over the next five years to fully implement.
- Work to achieve full Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) compliance in all public libraries in the State. Develop plans to conduct an ADAAG assessment of each public

library facility starting in 2009 with the goal of assessing all public library buildings by 2012.

- Provide periodic sensitivity training related to disabilities for all DDL and public library staff. Consider sensitivity training as a program to be included in one of the “Library Town Meetings.” Explore in 2009 and implement in 2010.

Objective 1.3. Increase Value to Customers

Potential Strategies

- Develop closer working relationships between the LBPH and public libraries to ensure the public has access to a “continuum” of service. Develop a regular schedule of informational visits to local public libraries to promote LBPH services. Incorporate LBPH content into Delaware Division of Libraries visits centered around the “**Delaware Public Library Standards and Guidelines: A Blueprint for Success**” initiative. A rotating schedule of library visits will begin in 2008.
- Review and adopt promising alternative formats and technologies that enhance access to library resources and services. Include responsibilities for monitoring and reporting on new technologies and formats in LBPH personnel job descriptions. Review job descriptions and update in 2009.
- Ensure that library programs are fully accessible (including option for American Sign Language translation, adaptive technologies, physical access to meeting facilities, etc.). Include a guideline for program accessibility in the “**Delaware Public Library Standards and Guidelines: A Blueprint for Success**” and work with individual libraries to

achieve full compliance through the library visits scheduled to begin in 2008.

- Develop access to web-based resources on disability issues and services that position libraries as one-stop-shopping locations for information. Convene a meeting of State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to discuss the “one-stop shopping” approach. Convene meeting in 2009 and, if desirable and feasible, begin implementation of the project in 2010.
- Ask other agencies that work with persons with disabilities to recommend resources to be included in public library collections and to be linked to library websites. Include this as a component of regular contacts with State agencies and non-profit organizations to enlist assistance in referring individuals to the LBPH program. Target: Annual contact with at least four State agencies and three non-profit organizations each year to discuss referrals to the LBPH program. Begin contacts in 2008.

Objective 1.4. Expand Customer Base

Potential Strategies

- Monitor the workload of LBPH staff and assess the need for additional staff to offer enhanced outreach services and awareness activities. Conduct a comprehensive staff assessment in 2009 and develop specific guidelines for monitoring activities in 2010.

- Develop more frequent and more in-depth contact with advocacy and service organizations serving the aging and people with disabilities and ask those agencies to refer their clients to local libraries and to the LBPH program. Target: Annual contact with at least four State agencies and three non-profit organizations each year to discuss referrals to the LBPH program. Begin contacts in 2008.
- Develop a program to engage public libraries in providing a “continuum of services” to the aging and to individuals with handicapping conditions. Develop a regular schedule of informational visits to local public libraries to promote LBPH services. Incorporate LBPH content into Delaware Division of Libraries visits centered around the “**Delaware Public Library Standards and Guidelines: A Blueprint for Success**” initiative. A rotating schedule of library visits will begin in 2008.
- Develop specific marketing campaigns that target various special needs populations with information regarding resources and services offered by libraries and by LBPH. Explore ways to underwrite the cost of the marketing campaign in 2008 (This item is related to the bookmarks and posters mentioned previously). Acquire sponsorship for the program, develop materials, and implement in 2009. (Lions Clubs and the Delaware Lions Foundation are good potential sources for sponsorship.)
- Encourage local libraries to invite local chapters of organizations serving persons with disabilities to use library meeting facilities. After completing the

ADAAG compliance review, identify the most accessible public library meeting spaces in Delaware and share the list (both electronically and in print) with State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations. Begin the process of identifying the accessible meeting facilities in 2009 and expand as the balance of the ADAAG compliance assessments are concluded.

- Involve LBPH in the Delaware Book Festival and in other public events. Establish an annual calendar of LBPH public events including the Delaware Book Festival. Develop first annual calendar for 2009. (Planning for the calendar to take place in 2008).
- Begin to collect email addresses for customers registered for LBPH services. Begin implementation immediately and expand as personal contact is made with each LBPH registered individual over the period 2008 – 2010.
- Develop and distribute an online version of the LBPH newsletter. Plan this in 2008 and implement in 2009. (see earlier strategy dealing with the website accessibility issue). Consider also, offering a web page that provides links to newsletter from other State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support agencies.
- Conduct customer segmentation study and identify needs/wants of various segments of special needs populations. Explore possible sources of funding for the study in 2009. Implement the market segmentation study in 2010.

GOAL # 2 – PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

All residents of the State of Delaware will be served by libraries that constantly monitor and improve their resources and services in order to enhance the relevance and quality of resources and to improve access to resources.

Objective 2.1. Enhance Access

Potential Strategies

- Provide enhanced online access for ordering materials (not just talking books). Explore enhancements to the Delaware Library catalog in 2009 with implementation in 2010.
- Redesign LBPH (and DDL) web presence to be more accessible (compliant with national guidelines for accessibility and usability). Establish contact with the Delaware Electronic Government Steering Committee and encourage the adoption of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Web Standards Project standards and initiatives related to accessibility. Review existing LBPH and DDL website design in 2008 and begin upgrading in 2009 with the target of a new, more accessible site in 2010.
- Assist local libraries in redesigning their web presence to comply with national accessibility and usability guidelines. Explore Oregon's involvement in the "PLINKIT Consortium" (Public Library Interface Kit) and consider participation to encourage improved and more-accessible local library websites. Explore PLINKIT in 2008 and, if

deemed desirable and feasible, implement in 2009.

- Ask persons with disabilities to help local libraries critique accessibility of facilities and services. Work with State agencies, with non-profit advocacy and support organizations to identify potential volunteers and the assistance of the agencies and organizations in carrying out the strategy. Seek funding to help defray volunteer expenses related to travel and expenses. Explore program in 2009 and implement in 2010.
- Ask other agencies that serve persons with disabilities to help local libraries critique accessibility of facilities and services. (see above) Explore program in 2009 and implement in 2010.
- Develop minimum guidelines for the availability of adaptive services and technologies available at local libraries and include them in the new service “blueprint” document (hierarchy of services and technologies available at anchor, regional, community libraries) Disseminate the guidelines in 2008 and work with libraries over the next five years to fully implement.
- Work to achieve full Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) compliance in all public libraries in the State. Develop plans to conduct an ADAAG assessment of each public library facility starting in 2009 with the goal of assessing all public library buildings by 2012.
- Provide periodic sensitivity training related to disabilities for all DDL and public library staff. Consider sensitivity training as a program to be

included in one of the “Library Town Meetings.”
Explore in 2009 and implement in 2010.

Objective 2.2. Improve Resources

Potential Strategies

- Offer a continuum of resources including non-NLS items through the LBPH program (e.g., develop a Large Print Collection using cooperative collection development procedures and make resources available via mail, provide access to downloadable e-books through the LBPH website). Explore with the Collaborative Collection Development Committee that has been established by DDL in 2008 and implement their recommendation in 2009 – 2012.
- Develop closer relationship with the public libraries to ensure that customers have access to a “continuum of services.” Develop a regular schedule of informational visits to local public libraries to promote LBPH services. Incorporate LBPH content into Delaware Division of Libraries visits centered around the “**Delaware Public Library Standards and Guidelines: A Blueprint for Success**” initiative. A rotating schedule of library visits will begin in 2008.
- Redesign LBPH (and DDL) web presence to be more accessible (compliant with national guidelines for accessibility and usability.) Establish contact with the Delaware Electronic Government Steering Committee and encourage the adoption of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Web Standards Project standards and initiatives related to accessibility. Review existing

LBPH and DDL website design in 2008 and begin upgrading in 2009 with the target of a new, more accessible site in 2010.

- Assist local libraries in redesigning their web presence to comply with national accessibility and usability guidelines. Explore Oregon's involvement in the "PLINKIT Consortium" (Public Library Interface Kit) and consider participation to encourage improved and more-accessible local library websites. Explore PLINKIT in 2008 and, if deemed desirable and feasible, implement in 2009.
- Work with other agencies that serve persons with disabilities to develop a "one-stop-shopping" website of resources for persons with disabilities. Convene a meeting of State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to discuss the "one-stop shopping" approach. Convene meeting in 2009 and, if desirable and feasible, begin implementation of the project in 2010.

Objective 2.3. Increase Relevance of Resources Potential Strategies

- Expand the scope of LBPH services to include other collections such as large print, downloadable books, etc. (Maine Talking Books Plus program is a good model). Discuss issue with the Collaborative Collection Development Committee and with the LBPH Consumer Advisory Council in 2008 and implement their recommendations in 2009 – 2012.

- Ask other agencies that work with persons with disabilities to recommend resources to be included in public library collections and to be linked to library websites. Include this as a component of regular contacts with State agencies and non-profit organizations to enlist assistance in referring individuals to the LBPH program. Target: Annual contact with at least four State agencies and three non-profit organizations each year to discuss referrals to the LBPH program. Begin contacts in 2008.
- Provide easy mechanisms (e.g., telephone and web-based) for persons with disabilities to provide suggestions for resources and services that would be useful/helpful to them. Explore the addition of a “user feedback link” on the DDL website in 2008 and implement in 2009. Encourage use through the LBPH newsletter and other contacts with registered borrowers (including routine phone contacts mentioned in Objective 1.1).

Objective 2.4. Enhance Quality of Services

Potential Strategies

- Develop closer relationships with the public libraries to ensure that customers have access to a “continuum of services.” Develop a regular schedule of informational visits to local public libraries to promote LBPH services. Incorporate LBPH content into Delaware Division of Libraries visits centered around the “**Delaware Public Library Standards and Guidelines: A Blueprint for Success**” initiative. A rotating schedule of library visits will begin in 2008.

- Assist local libraries in redesigning their web presence to comply with national accessibility and usability guidelines. Explore Oregon's involvement in the "PLINKIT Consortium" (Public Library Interface Kit) and consider participation to encourage improved and more-accessible local library websites. Explore PLINKIT in 2008 and, if deemed desirable and feasible, implement in 2009.
- Redesign LBPH (and DDL) web presence to be more accessible (compliant with national guidelines for accessibility and usability). Establish contact with the Delaware Electronic Government Steering Committee and encourage the adoption of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and Web Standards Project standards and initiatives related to accessibility. Review existing LBPH and DDL website design in 2008 and begin upgrading in 2009 with the target of a new, more accessible site in 2010.
- Work with other agencies that serve persons with disabilities to develop a "one-stop-shopping" website of resources for persons with disabilities. Convene a meeting of State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to discuss the "one-stop shopping" approach. Convene meeting in 2009 and, if desirable and feasible, begin implementation of the project in 2010.
- Develop minimum guidelines for the availability of adaptive services and technologies available at local libraries and include them in the new services "blueprint" document (hierarchy of

services and technologies available at anchor, regional, community libraries). Disseminate the guidelines in 2008 and work with libraries over the next five years to fully implement.

- Work to achieve full Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) compliance in all public libraries in the State. Develop plans to conduct an ADAAG assessment of each public library facility starting in 2009 with the goal of assessing all public library buildings by 2012.
- Provide periodic sensitivity training related to disabilities for all DDL and public library staff. Consider sensitivity training as a program to be included in one of the “Library Town Meetings.” Explore in 2009 and implement in 2010.

GOAL # 3 – ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

All residents of the State of Delaware will be served by libraries that are well organized, efficiently managed, and that use technology effectively to ensure the delivery of high quality resources and services.

Objective 3.1. Improve Efficiency

Potential Strategies

- Identify and implement best practices from other LBPH operations. Develop a best practices document in 2009 and begin implementation of practices in 2010.
- Work with other LBPH organizations to design highly efficient procedures for providing digital talking book service. Raise the issue of model

procedures for LBPH organizations with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) in 2008 and ask them to consider the establishment of a committee to develop best practices in relation to digital talking book services in 2009.

- Review and modify staff structure of LBPH as needed to increase outreach capacity. Begin review in 2009 and continue each year through 2012.
- Monitor the workload of LBPH staff and assess the need for additional staff to increase outreach capacity. Conduct a comprehensive staff assessment in 2009 and develop specific guidelines for monitoring activities in 2010.

Objective 3.2. Grow Capacity

Potential Strategies

- Extend and expand service offering through grants and services provided in conjunction with other State agencies (for example, cooperating on providing online access to directory information relevant to persons with disabilities). Convene a meeting of State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to discuss the “one-stop shopping” approach. Convene meeting in 2009 and, if desirable and feasible, begin implementation of the project in 2010.
- Adopt a prospectus approach to attracting ongoing support from foundations and other non-governmental funding sources. Work with the LBPH Consumer Advisory Council, State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to develop a “prospectus agenda” for the next five

years. Convene a summit to discuss the needs and to begin the development of the agenda. Convene groups in 2009 and develop prospectus documents in 2010.

- Engage local public libraries and local volunteers in providing a “continuum of services” (local homebound delivery programs, training in the use of adaptive technologies, etc.). Develop a best practices document based on activities of exemplary libraries in Delaware and in other states in 2009. Disseminate the document to libraries in 2010 and, with the cooperation of local libraries, implement in 2011. DDL may need to provide training for staff and volunteers late in 2010 or early in 2011.
- Develop strategic partnerships that strengthen the position of libraries as information resources with organizations serving persons with disabilities. Build on enhanced contact with other State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to help the agencies and organizations better understand the information dissemination role of DDL and of the public libraries in the State. Implement partnerships on an ongoing basis starting in 2008.

Objective 3.3. Leverage Technology Potential Strategies

- Aggressively pursue access technologies including the placement of high-end adaptive technologies in “anchor” libraries, the provision of non-NLS downloadable audio formats through LBPH and the roll out of NLS digital format. Work

with local libraries, with the Collaborative Collection Development Committee established by DDL, and with NLS to make sure that both staff and consumers are aware of how new and emerging technologies can enhance their access to information resources and recreational reading resources. Include responsibilities for monitoring and reporting on new technologies and formats in LBPH personnel job descriptions. Review job descriptions and update in 2009.

- Enhance access to NLS digital format through purchase of additional aftermarket players as needed. Monitor the availability of digital players through NLS beginning in 2009 and, if necessary, explore the availability of aftermarket players and, if available, purchase some to ensure that all eligible Delawareans who want such a device have access to the equipment.
- Explore innovative uses of technologies in LBPH organizations and adopt/adapt technologies when possible. Include this in request to COSLA to consider the establishment of a committee to develop best practices in the distribution of digital talking books. Raise issue to COSLA in 2008 and implement in 2009.
- Explore innovative uses of technology in serving persons with disabilities in exemplary libraries. Include a technology component in review of best practices in library service to persons with special needs. Begin implementation as soon as possible, but no later than 2010.

Objective 3.4. Improve Project Management Potential Strategies

- Work with other LBPH organizations to develop a plan for the implementation of new NLS digital talking book format. Raise the issue of model procedures for LBPH organizations with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) in 2008 and ask them to consider the establishment of a committee to develop best practices in relation to digital talking book services in 2009.
- Enhance reporting/tracking capability to increase the opportunity for contact with customers and potential customers. Develop a list of essential data elements to be collected in contacts with customers and potential customers and explore ways in which that information can be obtained. Develop data elements list in 2009 and implement in 2010.
- Involve LBPH staff in redesigning current LBPH procedures and in developing new digital talking book procedures. Begin the review of LBPH procedures in 2008 and incorporate findings of COSLA Committee on best practices in the distribution of digital talking books into Delaware LBPH procedures starting in 2010.

GOAL # 4 – HUMAN RESOURCES

All residents of the State of Delaware will be served by library staff members who are committed to providing exemplary customer service and who possess the knowledge and skills they need to provide high quality library and information services to all.

Objective 4.1. Recruit and Retain Qualified Staff Potential Strategies

- Provide enhanced opportunities for staff to interact with other LBPH programs. Encourage staff involvement with the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) division of the American Library Association (ALA). Establish staff liaisons with the LBPH operations in adjoining states (Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey). Establish liaison assignments in 2008 and establish contacts in 2009. Encourage and support (financially) attendance at conferences and meetings involving staff from other LBPH organizations. Consider scheduling a staff field trip to the New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped in Trenton in 2008.
- Ensure that any new staff members have skills related to digital technologies and outreach activities. Include an assessment of technology knowledge in interviews for position. Include training needs in employee performance reviews starting in 2009.
- Recruit and train new volunteers to assist with outreach activities. Determine desirable outreach activities in 2008 – 2009. Develop a separate

“outreach volunteer” job description in 2009.
Begin recruiting outreach volunteers in 2010.

Objective 4.2. Develop Staff Skill and Knowledge Potential Strategies

- Provide greater opportunities for LBPH staff to interact with staff from other libraries in Delaware, with staff from other LBPH operations, and with advocacy and service organizations in Delaware. Encourage staff involvement with the Association of Specialized and Cooperative Library Agencies (ASCLA) division of the American Library Association (ALA). Establish staff liaisons with the LBPH operations in adjoining states (Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey) and with specific State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations. Establish liaison assignments in 2008 and establish contacts in 2009. Encourage and support (financially) attendance at conferences and meetings involving staff from other LBPH organizations. Consider scheduling a staff field trip to the New Jersey Library for the Blind and Handicapped in Trenton in 2008.
- Provide opportunities for LBPH staff to attend professional conferences. Develop a 2009 calendar for LBPH staff development activities in 2008 and dedicate funding to allow participation of each staff member in at least one relevant conference or event in 2009 and in each subsequent year.
- Actively involve LBPH staff in Library Town Meetings. Involve LBPH staff in planning for the

sensitivity training session tentatively scheduled for 2010.

- Involve LBPH staff in the statewide Library Friends organization, advocacy training, and activities. Explore best way of engaging LBPH staff and the LBPH Consumer Advisory Council members in the statewide Library Friends organization. Provide at least one staff member with the opportunity for direct contact in 2008, two staff members in 2009, and all staff members in 2010 – 2012.
- Provide periodic sensitivity training related to disabilities for all DDL and public library staff. Consider sensitivity training as a program to be included in one of the “Library Town Meetings.” Explore in 2009 and implement in 2010.

Objective 4.3. Improve Employee Satisfaction Potential Strategies

- Provide greater opportunities for staff to recommend and implement changes in LBPH services. Develop an expectation for staff involvement in planning and benchmarking activities in LBPH staff job descriptions (which should be reviewed and updated in 2009.)
- Provide enhanced opportunities for interaction with staff from other Delaware libraries, staff from other LBPH organizations, and with advocacy and service organizations in the State of Delaware. Actively involve LBPH staff in Library Town Meetings. Involve LBPH staff in planning for the sensitivity training session tentatively scheduled for 2010.

GOAL # 5 – LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

All residents of the State of Delaware will be served by libraries that strive for excellence and that work collaboratively with other governmental agencies, with non-profit organizations, and with businesses to ensure that the public receives the highest quality service possible with the resources that are available.

Objective 5.1. Ensure Excellence in Performance Potential Strategies

- Develop specific measurements and targets for LBPH service and enhanced services to persons with disabilities. Raise the issue of evaluation for LBPH organizations with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) in 2008 and ask them to consider the establishment of a committee to develop measures that might be applied to LBPH services in 2009.
- Develop specific measurements related to services to persons with disabilities for local public libraries and include them in the new services “blueprint” document. Incorporate best practices in services to persons with disabilities into Delaware Division of Libraries visits centered around the “**Delaware Public Library Standards and Guidelines: A Blueprint for Success**” initiative. A rotating schedule of library visits will begin in 2008.
- Identify an exemplary LBPH operation serving a relatively small population and establish a benchmarking relationship with it (some potential for benchmarking with D.C.). Identify

benchmarking partner in 2009, establish a staff liaison relationship and begin implementation in 2010.

- Make service to special needs populations the topic of a Library Town Meeting or other statewide event for library staff. Consider sensitivity training and other aspects of services to persons with disabilities (such as best practices) as a program to be included in one of the “Library Town Meetings.” Explore in 2009 and implement in 2010.

Objective 5.2. Ensure Excellence in Evaluation Potential Strategies

- Create greater opportunity for consumer input and input from other libraries. Several new methods of gaining consumer input appear elsewhere in the plan. They include a feedback mechanism on the LBPH website, involvement of the LBPH Consumer Advisory Council in developing the Frequent Reader program, suggesting new outreach activities, and in helping to set the “prospective agenda for the next five years.
- Apply specific measurements and targets referred to in Objective 5.1. Implement use of new measures in 2009.
- Include evaluative measures in the DDL balanced scorecard tracking system and report to the Council on Libraries at regular intervals. Incorporate new measures for LBPH and for services to people with special needs provided by DDL and local libraries

into the balanced scorecard “dashboard” tracking system in 2010.

Objective 5.3. Develop Strategic Partnerships Potential Strategies

- Develop strategic partnerships that strengthen the position of libraries as information resources with organizations serving persons with disabilities. Build on enhanced contact with other State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to help the agencies and organizations better understand the information dissemination role of DDL and of the public libraries in the State. Implement partnerships on an ongoing basis starting in 2008.
- Develop more frequent and more in-depth contact with advocacy and service organizations serving the aging and people with disabilities and ask those agencies to refer their clients to local libraries and to the LBPH program. Target: Annual contact with at least four State agencies and three non-profit organizations each year to discuss referrals to the LBPH program. Begin contacts in 2008.
- Develop closer relationships with the public libraries to ensure that customers have access to a “continuum of services.” Develop a regular schedule of informational visits to local public libraries to promote LBPH services. Incorporate LBPH content into Delaware Division of Libraries visits centered around the “**Delaware Public Library Standards and Guidelines:**

A Blueprint for Success” initiative. A rotating schedule of library visits will begin in 2008.

GOAL # 6 – FINANCES

All residents of the State of Delaware are served by libraries that receive public funding sufficient to sustain quality services, resources, technology, facilities, and staff while they actively pursue grants and charitable contributions to offer enhanced services.

Objective 6.1. Grow New Revenues

Potential Strategies

- Adopt a prospectus approach to attracting ongoing support from foundations and other non-governmental funding sources. Work with the LBPH Consumer Advisory Council, State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to develop a “prospectus agenda” for the next five years. Convene a summit to discuss the needs and to begin the development of the agenda. Convene groups in 2009 and develop prospectus documents in 2010.
- Develop a network of citizen advocates for library service to persons with disabilities. Work with the statewide Library Friends organization in 2009 to establish an agenda for Friends to become involved in advocating for improved library and information services for Delawareans with disabilities. Begin implementation of the agenda in 2010.
- Actively seek and collect stories that document the importance of library and information services to special need populations. In the process of developing the Library Town Meeting session (tentatively scheduled for 2010) on library services

to individuals with special needs, include a request to all Delaware libraries for anecdotal accounts of services of exemplary services they have provided (2009). Conduct a literature search to identify stories from libraries in other states in 2009 as well.

- Develop strategic partnerships with advocacy and service organizations serving the aging and people with disabilities that enhance the ability of DDL and local libraries to extend and enhance services. Build on enhanced contact with other State agencies and non-profit advocacy and support organizations to help the agencies and organizations better understand the information dissemination role of DDL and of the public libraries in the State. Implement partnerships on an ongoing basis starting in 2008.

Objective 6.2. Use Resources Efficiently Potential Strategies

- Identify and implement best practices from other LBPH operations. Develop a best practices document in 2009 and begin implementation of practices in 2010.
- Identify and encourage local libraries to adopt best practices in serving special needs populations from exemplary libraries. Develop a best practices document based on activities of exemplary libraries in Delaware and in other states in 2009. Disseminate the document to libraries in 2010 and, with the cooperation of local libraries, implement in 2011. DDL may need to provide

training for staff and volunteers late in 2010 or early in 2011.

- Work with other LBPH organizations to design highly efficient procedures for providing digital talking book service. Raise the issue of model procedures for LBPH organizations with the Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA) in 2008 and ask them to consider the establishment of a committee to develop best practices in relation to digital talking book services in 2009.
- Review and modify staff structure of LBPH as needed to increase outreach capacity. Conduct a comprehensive staff assessment in 2009 and develop specific guidelines for monitoring activities and the potential for greater outreach capacity in 2010.