

**ACLA Strategic Plan
Narrative Update – Year-End 2006**

In the first year of implementation of the 2006-2010 Strategic Plan, ACLA has made significant progress against tasks and timeline.

Goal 1: Elevate Library Performance to Higher Standards

A. Encourage the implementation of established library service standards.

In May of 2006 the ACLA Membership adopted system standards. In addition a Task Force was appointed to review consequences for non-compliance with standards and to define a process for libraries to petition for special consideration in extraordinary circumstances. That Task Force reported out to the ACLA Board and its recommendations were adopted by the Board in October. However, the Membership voted to delay implementation of standards for an additional year.

B. Design distribution of funds to encourage continuous improvement.

The Membership also adopted a new formula in May of 2006 that combines State and RAD funds into a single mechanism. The Membership voted in October to continue with this formula, adding a hold harmless component and agreeing to pay out State funds against the formula first. However, the RAD Board did not accept this vote. In December the Membership voted to suspend implementation of the formula for an additional year, pending a report from the consultants (per RAD requirement). These consultants are to review the process whereby the formula was adopted and the formula itself. Once their report is issued the ACLA Board and Membership will respond accordingly.

C. Establish a standing committee on innovation and best practices.

An Innovation and Best Practices Committee was charged and convened, and developed recommendations over the course of six months. Those recommendations will be delivered to the ACLA Board and Membership in January 2007.

D. Assess library performance from the user perspective.

An LSTA grant was received, a consultant selected, a survey tool designed, and the survey was administered in the fall of 2006. Results from the survey will be reported out in the first quarter of 2007.

Goal 2: Promote increased collaboration for greater efficiencies and improved service

A. Develop broad-based networking and communications strategies.

ACLA staff has nearly completed, with the assistance of outside consultants, a major communications piece regarding benefits of ACLA membership. The results and recommendations will be reported out early in 2007. Additional lists have been developed for targeted communication including:

- *Current library director list*
- *Library board members*
- *Older adult service staff*
- *Youth service staff*

In addition, a survey of library staff is being designed to determine specific function (e.g., programming, outreach, etc.) within their libraries in order to isolate primary groups for targeted communication.

B. Develop, recognize, and reward models of collaboration.

Staff has identified best practice libraries in children's services as well as numerous literacy categories. These have been highlighted through the ACLA web site. Further, an on-line clearinghouse of shared programs has been developed and is available on the ACLA web site for use by local library directors and programming staff.

C. Strengthen and clarify partnerships with eiNetwork and District.

A transparent mapping of countywide funding sources was designed and used as an informational tool for library directors in negotiating various pools of funding. ACLA staff is participating in the strategic planning process of eiNetwork.

D. Assist local libraries with change management.

Outside funding and facilitators for a leadership retreat for library directors were secured. The retreat was conducted in October of 2006. Follow-up includes development of a customized leadership training program for library directors that will be launched in 2007. ACLA staff developed a tool for tracking visits to local libraries and staff is currently engaged in making and scheduling visits. An orientation for new library directors is now regularly conducted by ACLA staff in conjunction with volunteer library directors. The New Director Handbook was updated. ACLA staff is now working directly with the LAC regions to identify and assign mentors to new library directors.

E. Promote local library Board development.

The second cohort of board training is completed the third cohort is in mid-program. Discussion is underway with ACLA's partners at the Nonprofit Leadership Institute (Duquesne University) on design for on-going "refresher" training.

Goal 3: Pursue increased and diversified sources of funding to benefit the delivery of library services

- A. Educate government decision makers regarding the priority of effective library funding.

ACLA staff met throughout the year with State, RAD, and County officials regarding increases in the public library subsidy as well as changes in the distribution of RAD and State funding. With the assistance of the Innovation and Best Practices Committee plans are underway for 2007 advocacy initiatives that will incorporate library Friends and Trustees as principal advocates for library service.

- B. Develop new corporate, foundation, and individual funding.

Information is being gathered to assess the feasibility of establishing a development position. Additional information is being gathered regarding establishing an annual giving program that would allow donors to designate ACLA or a member library as a recipient of funding. Recommendations will be presented to the Board for consideration in the first quarter of 2007.

Goal 4: Expand access to quality library service throughout Allegheny County

The plan set out no specific tasks in this goal area until 2007.

Goal 5: Increase awareness of the value of library services and the countywide system to all stakeholders.

- A. Quantify and communicate the return on taxpayer investment in library service.

Work on this area is not scheduled to begin until the State releases its study on ROI, now slated for early 2007.

- B. Communicate to stakeholders the benefits of the system's regional collaboration.

A letter appeared in the Post-Gazette on New Year's Day discussing the success of ACLA as a model of regional collaboration. Work is underway on a more extensive informational piece that elaborates on that message and that ACLA will be able to adapt to a variety of formats. That work will be rolled out in 2007.