

Department of Education
AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND
Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request

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For carrying out the Act of March 3, 1879, as amended (20 U.S.C. 101 et seq.),
\$22,599,000. (Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2009)

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Amounts Available for Obligation
(\$000s)

	2008	2009	2010
<hr/>			
Discretionary appropriation:			
Appropriation	\$22,000	\$22,599	\$22,599
Across-the-board reduction	<u>-384</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal, appropriation	21,616	22,599	22,599
Total, direct obligations.....	21,616	22,599	22,599

Obligations by Object Classification
(\$000s)

	2008	2009	2010
<hr/>			
Grants, subsidies, and contributions.....	\$21,616	\$22,599	\$22,599

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Authorizing Legislation
(\$000s)

Activity	2009 Authorized	2009 Estimate	2010 Authorized	2010 Request
American Printing House for the Blind <i>(20 U.S.C. 101 et seq.)</i>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$22,599</u>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$22,599</u>
Total definite authorization	0		0	
Total appropriation		22,599		22,599

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**Appropriations History
(\$000s)**

	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2001	\$10,265	\$11,000	\$12,500	\$12,000
2002	12,000	13,000	14,000	14,000
2003	14,000	15,500	15,500	15,399
2004	14,000	16,500	16,500	16,403
2005	16,403	17,000	17,000	16,864
2006	16,864	17,000	18,500	17,573
2007	17,573	N/A ¹	N/A ¹	17,573 ¹
2008	17,573	17,573	22,000	21,616
2009	21,616	22,697 ²	22,500 ²	22,599
2010	22,599			

¹ This account operated under a full-year continuing resolution (P.L. 110-5). House and Senate Allowance amounts are shown as N/A (Not Available) because neither body passed a separate appropriations bill.

² The levels for the House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2009 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 110th Congress only through the House Subcommittee and the Senate Committee.

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(Act to Promote the Education of the Blind, 20 U.S.C. 101 et seq.)

FY 2010 Authorization (\$000s): Indefinite

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$22,599	\$22,599	0

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Act to Promote the Education of the Blind authorizes an annual appropriation for the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) to produce and distribute educational materials adapted for students who are legally blind and enrolled in formal educational programs below the college level. The Printing House, located in Louisville, Kentucky, has received Federal support under this Act since 1879. Materials produced by APH include textbooks in braille and large type, educational tools such as braille typewriters and computer software and hardware, teaching aides, including tests and performance measures, and other special supplies. The materials are distributed, through allotments of funds to the States, to programs serving individuals who are blind. The allotments are based on an annual census conducted by APH of the number of students who are legally blind in each State and are provided in the form of credits. State educational agencies and programs serving persons who are blind may order materials free of charge up to the amount of funds allocated to each State for educational materials. Approximately 80 percent of the appropriation is used to cover the cost of operations to produce these materials. The Printing House uses the remainder of the appropriated funds to conduct research related to developing and improving products and to provide advisory services to professional and consumer organizations on the availability and use of materials produced by APH.

The Printing House conducts research necessary to develop and improve educational materials in core curriculum areas such as science, mathematics, and social studies and adapts testing materials related to these subject areas. In addition, APH conducts research in product areas specific to the population, such as braille reading, orientation and mobility, and adapted technology. Special materials are also developed for use in teaching students who are blind and blind students with additional disabilities and in areas such as early intervention and early childhood education, prevocational training, and the functional use of residual vision. Educational and Advisory Services are provided to consumers primarily through three departments: Field Services, Communications, and Resource Services. Examples of advisory services include administration of the Student Registration System, Louis Database of Accessible Materials, Electronic File Repository, and Expert Database; National Instructional Partnership activities; and production of a variety of communication vehicles, such as catalogs, brochures, videos, and web-based information. APH also convenes ad hoc advisory committees and focus groups to address specific issues, as necessary.

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As of February 2009, APH had 206 Federal Quota accounts administered by 147 ex officio trustees who represent State educational agencies, schools for the blind, and other agencies serving the blind in each State. The Quota accounts represent funds from the appropriation that are allocated to the ex officio trustees in the form of credits that the trustees may use to order materials from APH. These trustees are responsible for the administration of the Federal accounts in each State. Items to be produced and distributed by APH are reviewed and approved by a seven-member Educational Products Advisory Committee (EPAC). The purpose of this committee, made up of ex officio trustees, is to ensure that all educational materials produced and research undertaken by APH are effectively focused on meeting the needs of students who are blind. In addition, a second five-member advisory committee of ex officio trustees, the Educational Services Advisory Committee (ESAC), provides oversight and accountability regarding APH's outreach and support services.

The States are required to provide a free appropriate public education, including appropriate related materials and supplies, to all students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Materials provided through this appropriation supplement the resources otherwise available to the States to achieve this goal. In order to meet their responsibilities under the IDEA, many States make additional purchases from APH and other suppliers of materials for students who are visually impaired.

Funding provided through the Act for educational materials in fiscal year 2008 represented approximately 70 percent of the Printing House's total sales income of \$17.22 million. Total funding provided through the Act represented approximately 72 percent of its total budget of \$29.8 million. Federal grants and contracts from agencies such as the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped's Talking Book program represented about another 18.1 percent of APH's total budget for fiscal year 2008. The remaining 9.9 percent of APH's budget came from nongovernmental contracts and revenue from unsubsidized product sales to State and local agencies, direct sales to individuals who are blind, private sector contract sales, corporate and individual donations from the private sector, and interest income from endowments and other investments.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(\$000s)
2005.....	\$16,864
2006.....	17,573
2007.....	17,573
2008.....	21,616
2009.....	22,599

FY 2010 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$22.6 million for activities to be conducted by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in fiscal year 2010. The request would maintain funding for APH at the fiscal year 2009 appropriation level. The program received a 4.5 percent increase in fiscal year 2009, even though it is only projecting a 0.6 percent increase in the number of children served over 2008. This was on top of a 23 percent increase in FY 2008. Given the size of

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these increases, the Department does not believe that an increase for this program is warranted for fiscal year 2010. Over the past 10 years, from 1999 to 2009, funding for this program increased by over \$13.9 million, or 161 percent. However, the number of students estimated to be served by APH in 2009 is only 1,325, or 2.3 percent, higher than the number served ten years ago in 1999.

Educational Materials. The Administration's request includes \$18 million for educational materials, the same amount as provided for fiscal year 2009. Materials produced by APH include textbooks in braille, large type, and audio recording formats; educational aides such as braille typewriters, raised graphics, and computer software and hardware; teaching tools such as tests and performance measures; and other special supplies. The materials available through this program offer States an additional resource to assist them to provide a free appropriate public education, as required by the IDEA, and to ensure that persons who are visually impaired receive the accessible educational materials they need to succeed in school.

The timely delivery of non-literary-based textbooks in accessible media for braille-reading students is crucial to ensuring that children who are blind have the same access to a free appropriate public education as their non-disabled peers. The legally blind population served through the Act is small, but has very specialized needs. In order to address this issue, APH initiated a 5-year program in fiscal year 2006 called the Braille Textbook Improvement Project to increase the number of textbooks available in braille and to improve the infrastructure necessary to facilitate innovative braille translation and production processes throughout the United States. The purpose of this project is to increase the quality and quantity of braille textbooks, assessment materials, and tactile graphics. The project is identifying and developing new technology to create products to provide students greater access to textbooks and other educational materials. As part of this program, APH is increasing the number of textbook titles it produces in braille and initiating improvements in the production and delivery of braille nationwide by working with partners, consultants, and experts in the fields of blindness, software development, and education. The request includes \$573,000 for the Braille Textbook Improvement Project as part of the request for educational materials, the same as the fiscal year 2009 amount.

The request for educational materials also includes \$1.22 million for the Accessible Textbook Initiative and Collaboration (ATIC) project, the same as the fiscal year 2009 level. The goal of ATIC is to deliver custom-produced accessible textbooks in a variety of media in a timely manner, which requires the adaptation of a large number of different textbooks, with very little lead-time to produce them. In addition to traditional hard copy textbooks in braille, this project has provided APH with the capacity to provide textbooks through on-demand transcription or enlargement, electronic media that can be downloaded from a file repository on the APH web site, audio files with synthetic speech, and digital files with human voice.

Advisory Services. The Administration is requesting \$1.6 million for Advisory Services for fiscal year 2010, the same as the amount for fiscal year 2009. Advisory Services general operations support the annual meeting of the ex-officio trustees, advisory group meetings, the annual census of students who are blind, printing and distribution of catalogs of available materials, and field services such as consultation, in-service training, and workshops. Staff in the Advisory Services area provide ongoing consumer information and technical support to customers and establish and maintain communication with APH's network of ex-officio trustees. These trustees

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are responsible for the administration of the Federal account in each State. APH also provides support and information to staff and teachers at the local level. Due to the large number of requests for presentations on a variety of topics, ranging from the use of APH databases to product demonstrations, APH has launched an initiative to provide training through the World Wide Web. These webcasts have allowed the Printing House to expand its ability to reach those who need information in an efficient, low-cost manner (www.aph.org).

The request includes \$100,000 for the third stage of a \$300,000 project begun in fiscal year 2008 to enhance the ability of the Louis Database of Accessible Materials to provide information to State and local educational agencies on electronic files that have been modified so they can be used to directly produce educational materials in accessible formats. The Printing House is designated by section 674 of the IDEA as the grantee for the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). This Center acts as a central repository for electronic files from publishers that have been formatted in compliance with the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS). State and local educational agencies use the NIMAS-compliant files to produce educational materials in specialized formats for use by students who are blind or have other print disabilities. The hardware and software upgrade will ensure that the Louis system can handle the influx of information on accessible materials, improve the ability of users to search the database, and ensure that the NIMAC and Louis can share data in the most efficient manner possible.

Examples of projects that would continue to be funded in fiscal year 2010 include the Expert Database and Weblog, Consumer Use initiatives, National Instructional Partnerships program, APH File Repository, APH Research Library, APH Web Site, Accessible Media Producers Database, and Collaborative Instructional Partnership with Teacher Training Programs. The APH website offers on-line purchasing of products, demonstration copies of APH software, downloadable catalogs and newsletters, information on training events, online surveys, online services such as the Louis Database and APH file repository. The site is visited approximately 127,000 times per month. APH also has created a database of accessible media producers who can produce specialized versions of texts and convert NIMAS files into accessible formats. The request provides sufficient funds to cover all advisory services activities the Printing House plans to conduct in fiscal year 2010.

Research. The Administration is requesting \$3 million for research in fiscal year 2010, the same amount as provided for fiscal year 2009. The Administration supports the need for ongoing research at the American Printing House for the Blind, so that it can continue to meet the changing needs of students who are blind and visually impaired. We believe the request will provide sufficient funds for APH to conduct a robust research program, including a wide variety of projects to develop new products for use with infants and toddlers, preschoolers, and school-aged children who are visually impaired, materials for students who are visually impaired with secondary disabilities, equipment and other materials to assist students with low vision, materials for learning braille, classroom learning materials, tactile graphics, and tools to aid in the transition from school to postsecondary educational or job settings.

Examples of research activities planned for fiscal year 2010 include: (1) developing materials to teach effective nonverbal and social communication skills that are usually learned by sight; (2) providing web-based opportunities for teachers and parents to exchange information regarding adaptations to existing products; (3) developing materials and products for individuals

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with cortical visual impairment; (4) adapting adult basic education test series for use with visually impaired adults who have low literacy skills, including English as second language (ESL) learners; (5) revising "Patterns," a current product, to support the development of braille literacy; (6) developing a new product that will support the teaching of primary math using the Nemeth Braille Code for mathematics; and (7) developing a set of materials designed to assist teachers who are providing instruction to students who have cortical visual impairment and are experiencing difficulty in identification of salient features in two dimensional materials.

The request for research includes \$200,000 for APH's Accessible Testing Program, which is the same as the amount the Printing House estimates that it will use for this program in fiscal year 2009. The goal of this initiative is to:

- Provide tests, practice tests, test administration manuals, and other test-related materials, including full-color large print assessments, in high quality accessible media in a timely manner,
- Promote the inclusion of blind and visually impaired individuals during test development, and
- Enhance the test performance of blind and visually impaired individuals through research, education, and communication.

A major focus of the program in fiscal year 2010 will continue to be on the education of test publishers, test developers, school psychologists, State assessment personnel, parents/caregivers, and test takers on issues specific to making test items accessible in a range of media for students who are blind and visually impaired. APH also plans to promote the need for test preparation materials and practice tests in legible formats and colors, where applicable, and in the same media/format as the actual tests, and to collaborate with the Braille Authority of North America on developing and implementing guidelines for transcription and formatting of standardized tests.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Distribution of funding:			
Educational materials:			
Operations	\$15,423	\$16,206	\$16,206
Braille Textbook Improvement Project	573 ¹	573 ¹	573 ¹
Accessible Textbook Initiative (ATIC)	<u>1,220¹</u>	<u>1,220¹</u>	<u>1,220¹</u>
Subtotal	17,216	17,999	17,999
Advisory services	\$1,300	\$1,500	\$1,500
Louis upgrade	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>100</u>
Subtotal	1,400	1,600	1,600

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	<u>2008</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>
Educational and technical research:			
Operations	\$2,725	\$2,800	\$2,800
Accessible Testing Program	<u>275</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>
Subtotal	3,000	3,000	3,000
 Total	 \$21,616	 \$22,599	 \$22,599
 Number of persons served	 58,388	 59,355	 60,000
Average per student allotment (whole dollars)	\$285 ²	\$293 ³	\$290
 Advisory committee meetings	 5	 5	 5
Ad hoc committee and focus group meetings	6	5	5
State educational agencies visited	7	9	9
Residential programs visited	9	10	10
Rehabilitation programs visited	5	5	3
Teacher training program contacts and product loans	15	11	13
In-service training programs and webcasts	17	10	15
Product training presentations and exhibits	132	125	130
 Catalogs distributed:			
Print catalogs	50,000	80,000	80,000
Cassette catalogs	500	3,000 ⁴	500
Disk catalogs (CD ROM)	6,600	7,000	7,000
 Total employees (full-time equiv.)	 309 ⁵	 314 ⁵	 314 ⁵

¹ Funds used for the Braille Textbook Improvement Project support planning committees, focus groups, and team meetings/workgroups related to the improvement of braille materials provided by APH. As such, the project is shown under Educational Materials. However, these funds are not included as part of the calculation of the average per student allotment because they are not directly used to produce products. The funds for ATIC are included as part of the calculation of the per student share.

² The average per student allotment displayed for fiscal year 2008 does not include \$645,000 reallocated from fiscal year 2007, which resulted in an additional \$11.18 per student in fiscal year 2008. These represent funds from Advisory Services and Research that were not used in the fiscal year 2007 and were reallocated to Educational Materials for use in the fiscal year 2008.

³ The average per student allotment displayed for fiscal year 2009 does not include \$673,262 reallocated from fiscal year 2008, which resulted in an additional \$11.53 per student in fiscal year 2009. These represent funds from Advisory Services and Research that were not used in fiscal year 2008 and were reallocated to Educational Materials for use in fiscal year 2009.

⁴ The Printing House only produces new catalogs in cassette format every other year. APH estimates that the demand will increase in fiscal year 2009 because the new catalogs will become available this year.

⁵ Includes personnel assigned to the NIMAC project.

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PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of program results is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in fiscal year 2010 and future years, and the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

APH has been reporting data from customer satisfaction surveys for several years. The survey results indicate that the educational materials provided through the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind are appropriate, timely, and of high quality and allow students who are visually impaired to benefit more fully from their educational programs. However, the Department has expressed concerns that the data are subjective in nature and do not provide sufficient information on key outcomes. The Department and Printing House worked together to develop more objective, appropriate measures of outcomes for APH activities and introduced six new measures in fiscal year 2007. Following receipt of performance data for FY 2009, the Department and APH plan to review the measures based on satisfaction surveys to determine if some or all of the measures should be eliminated.

Goal: Pre-college level blind students will receive appropriate educational materials that result in improved educational outcomes.

Objective: *Appropriate, timely, high-quality educational materials are provided to pre-college level blind students to allow them to benefit more fully from their educational programs.*

Measure: The percentage of American Printing House for the Blind trustees, advisory committee members, consumers, and teachers who agree that the educational materials provided through the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind are appropriate, timely, and high quality and allow blind students to benefit more fully from their educational programs.		
<i>Trustees-Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2005	98	100
2006	98	99
2007	98	100
2008	98	99.75
2009	98	
2010	98	

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<i>Advisory Committees-Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2005	100	100
2006	100	96
2007	100	100
2008	100	100
2009	100	
2010	100	

<i>Consumers-Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2005	95	96
2006	96	98
2007	96	99
2008	96	99
2009	96	
2010	96	

<i>Teachers - Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2005	96	99
2006	97	100
2007	97	99
2008	97	99
2009	97	
2010	97	

Assessment of progress: The survey instruments were constructed with the input of an external research firm and designed to measure the levels of satisfaction of various constituency groups with several factors. The results for each of these measures are extremely high. However, the Department has expressed concerns regarding the usefulness of the measures and reliability of satisfaction surveys. The responses to satisfaction surveys tend to be subjective and the ex officio trustees have a statutory connection to APH. Satisfaction surveys provide some indication of the success of the program, but are not sufficient, in and of themselves, to demonstrate the impact of the program. The Department added six new measures in fiscal year 2007 that are intended to produce more objective and verifiable information on APH's performance. Following the addition of the FY 2009 data for the new measures, we expect that some or all of the above surveys measures be eliminated. APH anticipates having data for the above measures for school year 2008-2009 by October 2009.

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Measure: The percentage of trustees and teachers who agree that the performance of students and their participation in their educational programs improves as a result of the availability of educational materials provided through the Act.

Trustees--Percentage who agree

Year	Target	Actual
2005	99	99.5
2006	99	99
2007	99	100
2008	99	100
2009	99	
2010	99	

Teachers--Percentage who agree

Year	Target	Actual
2005	95	98.5
2006	96	100
2007	96	99
2008	96	99
2009	96	
2010	96	

Assessment of progress: As with the set of measures on satisfaction with APH products, the results reported by APH are extremely high. The Department has expressed concerns regarding the validity and usefulness of data based on satisfaction surveys. Following an assessment of the data provided related to the new measures, we will determine the extent to which the above measures are still necessary. APH anticipates having data for school year 2008-2009 available by October 2009.

Objective: *To improve the quality of APH research and increase product usefulness*

Measure: The percentage of APH products sold that are new products.

Year	Target	Actual
2005		15.4
2006		15.2
2007	12	22.0
2008	12	27.0
2009	15	
2010	15	

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Assessment of progress: This measure was developed in fiscal year 2006 to help determine the efficacy of new products developed by APH. The purpose of the measure is to evaluate the reaction of consumers to new products created by the APH research department and introduced by the Printing House, which is determined by measuring the extent to which sales of new products represent an appropriate percentage of all products sold. This is determined through an examination of sales data reported by the Printing House. APH established an initial target of 12 percent based upon performance trends and an analysis of the average percentage that new products represented of all products offered by APH from fiscal year 2001 through 2004. We increased the target for fiscal years 2009 and 2010 based on the additional data provided for fiscal years 2005 and 2006. The Printing House far exceeded the fiscal year 2008 target of 12 percent, with an historic high of 27 percent. Data for fiscal year 2009 will be available in October 2009.

In fiscal year 2006, the Department developed the following three new measures for APH. For each of these measures, the Printing House held its first panel review in fiscal year 2007. The panel of experts proposed by APH was approved by the Department and reviewed a random sample of seven new products produced by the Printing House and eleven in fiscal year 2008. We expect to be able to establish baseline targets for these measures following the completion of the fiscal year 2008 expert panel reviews.

Measure: The average rating, according to approved criteria on relevance, for a sample of new American Printing House for the Blind products evaluated by an independent panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise related to the target audience.		
Year	Target	Actual
2007		4.11
2008		4.5
2009	Set a baseline	
2010	Maintain a baseline	

Assessment of progress: For this measure, a panel of seven experts annually reviews a random sample of new products developed by APH to assess whether: (1) there is evidence of need for the product; (2) there is evidence that APH sought the opinions of knowledgeable individuals on the need for the product; (3) APH made the decision to produce the product based on a standardized process for product selection; (4) the product addresses an identified need for individuals who are visually impaired; and (5) the product is fully accessible for the intended population. The products are rated using a 7-point rating scale, where 1 equals “does not meet criteria,” 4 equals “meets criteria,” and 7 equals “exceeds criteria.” The mean of the scores is reported in the actual column. For each of the two years for which information is available, the mean of the scores was slightly above the “meets criteria” rating. The Department expects to set baseline target for this measure in fiscal year 2009 and to receive new data for the measure by October 2009.

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Measure: The average rating, according to approved criteria on quality, for a sample of new American Printing House for the Blind products evaluated by an independent panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise related to the target audience.

Year	Target	Actual
2007		3.73
2008		4
2009	Set a baseline	
2010	Maintain a baseline	

Assessment of progress: The panel of seven experts annually reviewed a random sample of new products developed by APH to assess whether: (1) appropriate research methodologies are being used consistent with the type of product being developed; (2) data are gathered from a geographically diverse U.S. population and a variety of potential user groups; (3) evaluation data are gathered from appropriately qualified individuals; (4) development demonstrates use of field-reviewed data for modification to the product prior to final development; and (6) data are gathered on student and consumer outcomes related to the use of the proposed product. The products are rated using a 7-point rating scale, where 1 equals “does not meet criteria, 4 equals “meets criteria,” and 7 equals “exceeds criteria.” The mean of the scores is reported in the actual column. In fiscal year 2007, the average of the scores was just below the “meets criteria” rating, and in fiscal year 2008 just at that rating level. The Department expects to set baseline target for this measure in fiscal year 2009 and receive new data for this measure by October 2008.

Measure: The average rating, according to approved criteria on utility, for a sample of new American Printing House for the Blind products evaluated by an independent panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise related to the target audience.

Year	Target	Actual
2007		4.43
2008		4.5
2009	Set a baseline	
2010	Maintain a baseline	

Assessment of progress: For this measure, a panel of seven experts annually reviewed a random sample of new products developed by APH to assess whether: (1) sales of the new products indicate demand; (2) new product indicators, such as field evaluations and other feedback, substantiate that the new product is meeting a need; and (3) the products are considered highly useful for individuals with visual impairments. The products are rated using a 7-point rating scale, where 1 equals “does not meet criteria, 4 equals “meets criteria,” and 7 equals “exceeds criteria.” The mean of the scores is reported in the actual column. In fiscal years 2007 and 2008, the average of the scores was slightly above the “meets criteria” rating. The Department expects to set baseline target for this measure in fiscal year 2009 and receive new data for this measure by October 2008.

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Efficiency Measures

The Department worked closely with the Printing House to develop appropriate efficiency measures for the Federal program at APH. The following two measures were established in fiscal year 2006.

Measure: The cost (in cents) per page to produce color large type textbooks.		
Year	Target	Actual
2006		14.5
2007	14.21	14.74
2008	13.92	11.3
2009	13.63	
2010	13.34	

Explanation: APH reduced the cost well below the target for fiscal year 2008. A number of factors affect the cost per page, including cost of raw materials, demand for products, and efficiency of operations. While APH well exceeded the target for fiscal year 2008, additional years of data are necessary to determine whether the Printing House will continue to keep the cost per page at this low a level. Large print materials constitute approximately 25 percent of APH total sales. The objective is to reach 13.05 cents (14.5 cents less 10 percent) by the end of fiscal year 2011. We anticipate receiving data for fiscal year 2009 in October 2009.

Measure: The cost (in cents) per page to produce braille textbooks.		
Year	Target	Actual
2006		9.5
2007	9.31	11.1
2008	9.12	9.97
2009	8.93	
2010	8.74	

Explanation. APH did not meet the target for fiscal year 2008, though the cost of producing Braille was much lower than in fiscal year 2007. APH noted that the numbers of braille pages produced, based on demand, were much lower in fiscal year 2007 than in fiscal years 2006 and 2008. This resulted in decreased efficiency (higher costs per page) of production, even with efforts by APH to reduce overhead costs based on forecasts of anticipated reductions in orders for on-demand braille textbooks. The objective is to reach 8.55 cents (9.5 cents less 10 percent) by the end of fiscal year 2011. Braille materials represent approximately 15 percent of APH total sales. We anticipate receiving data for fiscal year 2009 in October 2009.

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Other Performance Information

The Department conducted an on-site monitoring visit to APH from March 10 – 11, 2008. The purpose of the visit was to examine compliance with applicable requirements, use of Federal funds, quality of Government Performance and Results Act and other program data, and the performance of selected programs. This included an assessment of APH's strategic planning process. This review was conducted as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of APH programs and administrative operations funded by the annual Federal appropriation.

During the visit, the Department also discussed the changes to the definition of what constitutes a student who is blind, specifically the expansion of the definition to include students whose visual impairments stem from neurological, cortical, or cerebral disorders rather than traditional eye conditions and asked that additional information be provided on the impact that the expanded definition has had on the Federal program at APH. APH reported that the impact was significant, and that cortical visual impairment (CVI) is the fastest growing defined cause of blindness in infants. The number of students served by APH with this diagnoses increased from 2,638, or 5 percent of students served, in 2004, the year the definition of blindness was expanded, to 8,864, or 15 percent, in 2008. This represents a very rapid increase, though APH believes that some of these students were already being served, but were not classified appropriately. In response to the growth in students served in this category, all APH project leaders were advised to review the literature on CVI and, when appropriate, take into consideration the needs of this population in their product-development activities. APH also hired a national expert in CVI to serve as a project leader to direct related project development and expanded its training activities to add a focus on how APH products could be used with these students.

Regarding the Printing House's strategic planning process, the Department stated its belief that a long-term strategic plan would enable APH to more effectively position itself as a unique provider of evidence-based accessible instructional materials, using the latest technologies that are available to provide materials to students who are blind or visually impaired in a timely manner. The Department believes that APH's annual Tactical Plan and operational goals are valuable planning tools, which clearly outline specific objectives for current operations and technological upgrades at APH. However, the Tactical Plan and operational goals do not address changes in the field of textbook publishing, changes stemming from the adoption of the national instructional materials accessibility standard, and the explosion of digitized options for creating accessible instructional materials that are becoming available to students who are blind or visually impaired. The Department urged APH to seriously consider developing a long-term strategic plan that addresses the anticipated impact of these changes.

Another area that was reviewed was how APH allocates Federal and private funds for educational and technical research, how that research supports the development of new products, and the role of Federal funding in APH research and development. The Department also examined how products manufactured by external vendors are chosen for distribution through the Federal Program. APH provided additional information, and the Department is following up with the Printing House on each of these issues.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

Program Improvement Efforts

The Department is working on a number of program improvement activities, including the following:

- *Ensure that APH implements revised guidelines for evaluating the quality, utility, and relevance of products.* The Printing House hired a consultant to assist it to develop and run the expert panels and data collections necessary to provide appropriate outcome data for the new measures related to the quality of APH research and relevance and utility of new products. In fiscal year 2008, the Department worked with APH on refining the methodology it was using to conduct the panels and analyze the data to ensure that it is following guidelines that were developed specific to these panels.
- *Conduct an analysis of existing performance measures based on survey data to determine if there are measures that are no longer needed.* In fiscal year 2009, the Department plans to complete an analysis of the six performance measures based on survey data to determine if there are measures that are no longer needed. A final decision will not be made until after the Department receives the fiscal year 2009 data for the new measures.
- *The Department will take affirmative steps to assess the scope and quality of the program to ensure that it is operating effectively, addressing its statutory purpose, and achieving results.* The Department believes that the monitoring and oversight procedures and the six new performance measures discussed above provide substantial information on the effectiveness of the program of Federal support for APH and whether the program is meeting the needs of its service population.
- *Conduct an analysis of the how Federal funds are being used at APH.* In fiscal year 2007, the Department informed APH that it was out of compliance with Federal requirements related to the Single Audit Act. In fiscal year 2008, we provided guidance to APH on what actions would be required to come into compliance.