

Department of Education
AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Appropriations Language	K-1
Amounts Available for Obligation	K-2
Obligations by Object Classification	K-2
Authorizing Legislation	K-3
Appropriations History	K-4
Activity:	
American Printing House for the Blind	K-5

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

For carrying out the Act of March 3, 1879, as amended (20 U.S.C. 101 et seq.),
\$24,600,000. (Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2010)

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Amounts Available for Obligation
(\$000s)

	2009	2010	2011
Discretionary appropriation:			
Appropriation	<u>\$22,599</u>	<u>\$24,600</u>	<u>\$24,600</u>
Total, direct obligations	22,599	24,600	24,600

Obligations by Object Classification
(\$000s)

	2009	2010	2011
Grants, subsidies, and contributions.....	\$22,599	\$24,600	\$24,600

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Authorizing Legislation
(\$000s)

Activity	2010 Authorized	2010 Estimate	2011 Authorized	2011 Request
American Printing House for the Blind <i>(20 U.S.C. 101 et seq.)</i>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$24,600</u>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$24,600</u>
Total definite authorization	0		0	
Total appropriation		24,600		24,600

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Appropriations History
(\$000s)

	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
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	22,599	24,600 ³	24,600
2011	24,600			

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.

³ The level for the Senate Allowance reflects Committee action on the regular annual fiscal year 2010 appropriation bill, which proceeded in the 111th Congress only through the Senate Committee.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

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

FY 2011 Authorization (\$000s): Indefinite

Budget Authority (\$000s):

	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>Change</u>
Annual appropriation	\$24,600	\$24,600	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.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

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 2009 represented approximately 70 percent of the Printing House's total sales income of \$21.2 million. Total funding provided through the Act represented approximately 82 percent of its total budget of \$27.7 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 9 percent of APH's total budget for fiscal year 2009. The remaining 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)
2006	\$17,573
2007	17,573
2008	21,616
2009	22,599
2010	24,600

FY 2011 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$24.6 million for activities to be conducted by the American Printing House for the Blind (APH) in fiscal year 2011. The request would maintain funding for APH at the fiscal year 2010 appropriation level. The fiscal year 2010 appropriation level includes an increase of over \$2 million or 8.9 percent over the fiscal year 2009 appropriation. This increase is on top of a 4.5 percent increase in fiscal year 2009 over the prior year and 23 percent

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

increase in fiscal year 2008 as compared to fiscal year 2007. At the same time, the Printing House is only predicting a 1.1 percent increase in the number of children served in 2010 over 2009 and the number only increased by 0.6 percent between fiscal years 2008 and 2009. Over the past 10 years, from 2000 to 2010, funding for this program increased by over \$14.5 million, or 144 percent. However, the number of students estimated to be served by APH in 2010 is only 2,304 or 4 percent higher than the number served ten years ago in 2000. We believe the request provides sufficient resources to support a robust program in each of the educational materials, advisory services, and research areas.

Educational Materials. The Administration's request includes \$20 million for educational materials, an increase of \$600,000 over the fiscal year 2010 level. The increase comes from funds that are no longer needed for Advisory Services and Research. 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 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (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. In order to address this need, APH initiated a program 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 request for educational materials includes \$500,000 for this project, the same as the fiscal year 2010 amount. The request also includes \$1.3 million for the Accessible Textbook Initiative and Collaboration (ATIC) project, the same as the fiscal year 2010 level. The goal of ATIC is to deliver custom-produced accessible textbooks in a variety of media in a timely manner.

Advisory Services. The Administration is requesting \$1.5 million for Advisory Services for fiscal year 2011. This amount is \$100,000 less than the level for fiscal year 2010. The reduction is due to cost savings in the Advisory Services Department associated with the use of technology to provide training and technical assistance. This shift in department focus has resulted in a decrease in travel and printing costs. The \$100,000 in savings is reallocated to educational materials in fiscal year 2011.

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 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. In order to maximize the availability of its training and technical assistance activities, APH has begun to provide training through the World Wide Web. These web-based training sessions have given the Printing House the ability to reach those who want information and

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

training in an efficient, low-cost manner and to provide this training and information to a wider audience (www.aph.org).

Projects that would continue to be funded in fiscal year 2011 include the Consumer Use Initiative, National Instructional Partnerships program, Expert Database and Weblog, 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 2011.

Research. The Administration is requesting \$3.5 million for research in fiscal year 2011, which is \$500,000 less than the amount allocated for research in fiscal year 2010. The decrease is because APH is using \$1 million of the fiscal year 2010 increase in appropriations for one-time costs associated with initiatives to develop a full-page refreshable Braille/tactile graphic display and pedestrian-focused navigation system for visually impaired students. Refreshable Braille is an electronic tool that enables blind students to independently access information provided through charts, graphs, and pictorially presented data. The navigation system would utilize global positioning system (GPS) technology and other technologies to facilitate both outdoor and indoor independent travel. In fiscal year 2011, APH would retain \$500,000 of the funds associated with these initiatives in the Research Department and reallocate the other \$500,000 to the educational materials program.

The Department recognizes the need for APH to conduct ongoing research, 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 wide range of research projects, including development of 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.

Product Development. In fiscal year 2009, APH released a redesign of the Perkins Braille, a typewriter for individuals who are blind that is used to create Braille materials. The new Perkins-APH Braille is quieter, lighter, and more comfortable to use than the old model. It includes functions such as a built-in eraser, way to read the page easily while writing, shorter keystroke that requires less force, and margin guides on the front. Another example of a product developed by APH is the Early Braille Trade Books Project and APH Light Box. Under the trade book program, APH combines commercially available books with braille labels for beginning readers. The light box is a tool used with children that still have some sight. In fiscal year 2009, APH produced a digital version of the light box that can be used in computer programs to provide extension activities for the Light Box and/or provide familiar images for children who transition from Light Box to computer activities.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

Product development activities planned for fiscal year 2011 are categorized into ten content areas: Adult Life, Braille, Core Curriculum, Cortical Visual Impairment, Early Childhood, Emergent Literacy, Low Vision, Multiple Disabilities, Tactile Graphics, and Technology. The request also includes \$275,000 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 2010. 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.
- Enhance the test performance of blind and visually impaired individuals through research, education, and communication.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2009</u> ¹	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Distribution of funding:			
Educational materials:			
Operations	\$16,299	\$17,200	\$17,800
Braille Textbook Improvement Project	500 ²	500 ²	500 ²
Accessible Textbook Initiative (ATIC)	<u>1,300</u> ²	<u>1,300</u> ²	<u>1,300</u> ²
Subtotal	18,099	19,000	19,600
Advisory services	\$1,500	\$1,600	\$1,500
Educational and technical research:			
Operations	\$2,725	\$2,725	\$3,225
Accessible Testing Program	275	275	275
Refreshable Braille & GPS Technology	<u>0</u>	<u>1,000</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal	3,000	4,000	3,500
Total	\$22,599	\$24,600	\$24,600
Number of persons served	59,355 ³	60,000 ³	61,000 ³
Average per student allotment (whole dollars)	\$297 ⁴	\$308 ⁵	\$313
Advisory committee meetings	5	5	5
Ad hoc committee and focus group meetings	1	3	3
State educational agencies visited	12	10	10
Residential programs visited	9	10	10
Rehabilitation programs visited	5	5	5
Teacher training program contacts and product loans	15	17	19
In-service training programs and webcasts	20	20	20
Product training presentations and exhibits	120	130	130

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (cont.)

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Visits with Ex Officio Trustees	11	15	15
Catalogs distributed:			
Print catalogs	48,210	53,000	58,000
Cassette catalogs	232 ⁶	0	0
Computer Disk catalogs	9,759	11,000	12,000
Audio Disk (human narration)	---	4,000	4,500
Total employees (full-time equiv.)	290 ⁷	290 ⁷	290 ⁶

¹ For comparison purposes, the figures displayed for fiscal year 2009 reflect the original allocation of the appropriation. They do not include subsequent reallocations. In fiscal year 2009, APH reallocated \$117,369 from Research, Braille Textbook Improvement Project, and ATIC. APH reallocated \$34,921 of these funds to Educational Materials (resulting in an additional \$.59 per student in fiscal year 2009) and \$82,448 to Advisory Services for use in fiscal year 2009.

² 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.

³ The persons served numbers for fiscal years 2009 and 2010 are actual figures. However, the number for fiscal year 2011 is an estimate.

⁴ The average per student amount is calculated in terms of the fiscal year 2009 appropriation. The amount 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.

⁵ The average per student allotment displayed for fiscal year 2010 does not include \$217,904 in unused funds and savings of \$2,485,000 from Educational Aids, \$240,000 from Research, and \$75,000 from Advisory services. These savings are reallocated from fiscal year 2009, which resulted in an additional \$14.60 per student in fiscal year 2010.

⁶ The Printing House is discontinuing cassette tape catalogs in favor of a catalog on audio CD with human narration.

⁷ Includes personnel assigned to the NIMAC project.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, for example, GPRA goals, objectives, measures, performance targets, 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, those requested in fiscal year 2011 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

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

Department expressed concerns for several years 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. In fiscal year 2009, the Department and APH reviewed the six measures that use survey data to determine whether they should be retained or deleted. Based on this review, the Department plans to revise four of the six measures and eliminate the other two in fiscal year 2010.

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.

Trustees-Percentage who agree

Year	Target	Actual
2006	98	99
2007	98	100
2008	98	99.75
2009	98	98.75
2010	98	
2011	98	

Advisory Committees-Percentage who agree

Year	Target	Actual
2006	100	96
2007	100	100
2008	100	100
2009	100	98
2010	100	
2011	100	

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

<i>Consumers-Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2006	96	98
2007	96	99
2008	96	99
2009	96	99
2010	96	
2011	96	

<i>Teachers - Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2006	97	100
2007	97	99
2008	97	99
2009	97	98
2010	97	
2011	97	

Assessment of progress: The Department believes that a survey instrument is an appropriate vehicle to obtain data on consumer satisfaction with products, including whether the educational materials provided through the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind are appropriate to the consumer's needs, delivered in a timely manner, and of high quality. However, the same instrument is not appropriate for use in determining whether blind students benefit more fully from their educational programs because of these products. A rigorous evaluation would be necessary to determine whether students are making progress and the extent to which that progress is due to the availability of these materials.

The Department is revising this measure for fiscal year 2010 to focus on to the percentage of APH trustees who agree that the APH's educational materials are appropriate, timely, and high quality. APH plans to provide corresponding historical data so that a new target can be established. The Department plans to change the performance measure and provide data for the revised measure in fiscal year 2010.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

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
2006	99	99
2007	99	100
2008	99	100
2009	99	100
2010	NA	
2011	NA	

Teachers--Percentage who agree

Year	Target	Actual
2006	96	100
2007	96	99
2008	96	99
2009	96	99
2010	NA	
2011	NA	

Assessment of progress: The Department believes that these surveys are too subjective to use to make a determination that the performance of blind students and their participation in their educational programs improves or does not improve as a result of the availability of educational materials provided through the Act. APH agrees that this measure is no longer necessary. The measure will be dropped from the performance plan for APH in fiscal year 2010.

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
2006		15
2007	12	22
2008	12	27
2009	15	27
2010	15	
2011	15	

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

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 surpass a minimum level of products sold. This is determined through an examination of sales data reported by the Printing House. The targets represent the minimum level of new product sales that should be achieved to ensure that the products developed by APH reflect consumer needs. 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 beyond based on the additional data provided for fiscal years 2007 and 2008. In fiscal years 2008 and 2009, the Printing House far exceeded the minimum level established as the target. Data for fiscal year 2010 will be available in October 2010.

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 established baseline targets for these measures for fiscal year 2010 based on the first two years of actual data.

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	4.2
2010	4	
2011	4	

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 the number reported in the actual column. For each of the three years for which information is available, the mean of the scores exceeded the “meets criteria” rating. However, the average scores declined as compared to the prior year level in both fiscal years 2008 and 2009. In fiscal year 2010, the Department plans to examine the data to see if it can determine why this trend has occurred. We expect to obtain data for fiscal year 2010 in October 2010.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

Measure: The average rating, according to approved criteria on quality of research, 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	3.7
2010	4	
2011	4	

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 the number reported.

In fiscal year 2007, the average of the scores was just below the “meets criteria” rating, in fiscal year 2008 just at that rating level, and below the level again in fiscal year 2009. The panel members identified two concerns that could affect the quality review: (1) criteria were difficult to apply because not all products produced by APH require background research to determine the appropriateness of the proposed product; and (2) there is limited research available in the field of education of students who are blind and visually impaired. The Department plans to review the evaluation criteria and panel operations in fiscal year 2010 to determine if changes are needed. Data for fiscal year 2010 will be available to the Department in October 2010.

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	4.4
2010	4	
2011	4	

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

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

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 the number reported. In fiscal years 2007 and 2008, the average of the scores was slightly above the “meets criteria” rating. The Department expects to receive new data for this measure by October 2010.

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	11.5
2010	13.34	
2011	13.05	

Explanation: While the cost per page increased slightly in fiscal year 2009, the cost was well below the target. A number of factors affect the cost per page, including cost of raw materials, demand for products, and efficiency of operations. 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. The Department anticipates receiving data for fiscal year 2010 in October 2010.

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	10.3
2010	8.74	
2011	8.55	

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

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, are not directly under its control, but affect the cost per page. For example, demand was lower in fiscal years 2007 and 2009 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. 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. The Department expects to receive data for fiscal year 2010 in October 2010.

Other Performance Information

The Department conducted an on-site monitoring visit to APH from March 9 – 10, 2009. 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 on-site monitoring visit, we looked at how APH determines which materials to braille and priorities for new products. The Printing House explained that each year the Educational Products Advisory Committee (EPAC) reviews proposed new products and discusses emerging technologies, trends in education theories, policies, curricula, and standards, and future assistive technology needs. The Printing House develops a three-year plan for each proposed product, which outlines the process for the product's development, production, testing, and dissemination. EPAC members provide in-depth feedback on the proposed products, and after prototypes of the new products have been developed, professionals and students conduct field-testing on the prototypes. APH considers the three-year plan for each product to be part of the institution's overall strategic plan. The Printing House also stated that it contacted the Center for Non-Profit Excellence to take advantage of their expertise in the planning of product development.

In addition, APH also refers back to the 1997 Strategic Plan to monitor its progress in serving its consumers.¹ APH reported during the March 2009 monitoring visit, that it continuously "scans the environment" to keep abreast of emerging production and materials technologies, by: (1) researching the Internet; (2) participating in listservs and Webinars; (3) subscribing to trade publications; and (4) joining industry organizations, such as Screen Graphics Images Association, Printing Industries of America, Modelmakers Internet List Exchange, and Digital Accessible Information System (DAISY). APH asserted that its vendors are the best source of information on emerging technologies, as APH purchases over 25,000 different parts for manufacturing products. These vendors keep APH current on new equipment, technologies, and materials and with this information, APH stated that it is able to integrate the new production and materials technologies into its products.

¹ The 1997 Strategic Plan includes eight objectives: (1) Ninety percent of items ordered will be shipped on or before the promised ship date; (2) Increase the dollar sales by distribution channel over those for the previous year; (3) Increase the number of sales outlets from the previous year; (4) Seventy-five percent of the timelines for new product development will be met; (5) Increase the number of new products introduced; (6) Increase the total unit sales of a mix of new products; (7) Increase total dollar sales from the previous year; and (8) Reduce the percentage of sales returned for credit or repair from the previous year.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

The Department continues to be interested in APH's efforts to stay up-to-date with developments in electronic text and printing technologies; changes in teaching methods; new curriculum standards and requirements; and future assistive technology needs, including the impact these technologies, methods, and standards have on APH's ability to meet the needs of students who are blind and visually impaired for accessible instructional materials. The Department recommended that APH identify specific technologies that may be of benefit to students who are blind or visually impaired and set priorities for development of these technologies, when updating its Strategic Plan. With identified priorities, APH will be able to set aside appropriate resources to support those efforts, and its administrators will be able to make decisions aligned with its goals and objectives.