

**Department of Education**  
**AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**  
**Fiscal Year 2015 Budget Request**

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**AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**

For carrying out the Act of March 3, 1879, as amended, \$24,456,000. (*Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2014.*)

**AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**

**Appropriation, Adjustments and Transfers**  
(dollars in thousands)

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Appropriation/Adjustments/Transfers	2013	2014	2015
<b>Discretionary:</b>			
Appropriation .....	\$24,505	\$24,456	\$24,456
Across-the-reduction (P.L. 113-6).....	<u>-49</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total, discretionary appropriation .....	24,456	0	0
Sequester (P.L. 112-25).....	<u>-1,233</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total, adjusted discretionary appropriation .....	23,223	0	0

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**AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND**

**Authorizing Legislation**  
(dollars in thousands)

Activity	2014 Authorized	2014 Estimate	2015 Authorized	2015 Request
American Printing House for the Blind <i>(20 U.S.C. 101 et seq.)</i>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$24,456</u>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$24,456</u>
Total definite authorization	0		0	
Total appropriation		24,456		24,456

## AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

### Appropriations History (dollars in thousands)

Year	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
2006	\$16,864	\$17,000	\$18,500	\$17,573
2007	17,573	N/A <sup>1</sup>	N/A <sup>1</sup>	17,573
2008	17,573	17,573	22,000	21,616
2009	21,616	22,697 <sup>2</sup>	22,500 <sup>2</sup>	22,599
2010	22,599	22,599	24,600 <sup>3</sup>	24,600
2011	24,600	24,600 <sup>4</sup>	24,600 <sup>3</sup>	24,600 <sup>5</sup>
2012	24,600	24,551 <sup>6</sup>	24,551 <sup>6</sup>	24,505
2013	24,505	24,505 <sup>7</sup>	24,505 <sup>7</sup>	23,223
2014	24,505	N/A <sup>8</sup>	24,456 <sup>3</sup>	24,456
2015	24,456			

<sup>1</sup> 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.

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

<sup>3</sup> The levels for the Senate allowance reflect Committee action only.

<sup>4</sup> The levels for the House allowance reflect the House-passed full-year continuing resolution.

<sup>5</sup> The level for appropriation reflects the Department of Defense and Full-Year Continuing Appropriations Act, 2011 (P.L. 112-10).

<sup>6</sup> The level for the House allowance reflects an introduced bill and the level for the Senate allowance reflects Senate Committee action only.

<sup>7</sup> The level for the House and Senate allowances reflect action on the regular annual 2013 appropriations bill, which proceeded in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress only through the House Subcommittee and the Senate Committee.

<sup>8</sup> The House allowance is shown as N/A because there was no Subcommittee action.

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### American Printing House for the Blind

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

(dollars in thousands)

FY 2015 Authorization: Indefinite

Budget Authority:

<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$24,456	\$24,456	0

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### 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 assessments, and other special supplies. The materials are distributed, through allotments of funds to the States, to programs serving students 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 75 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 professionals 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, English language arts, and social studies and adapts testing materials related to these subject areas. In addition, APH undertakes research in product areas specific to the visually impaired population, such as braille reading, orientation and mobility, and assistive technology. Special materials are also developed for use in teaching students who are blind and have 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

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Partnership activities; and production of catalogs, brochures, videos, and a wide variety of web-based information. APH also convenes expert advisory committees and focus groups to address specific issues, as necessary.

As of October 2013, APH had 205 Federal Quota accounts administered by 142 ex officio trustees who represent State educational agencies, schools for the blind, rehabilitation programs, and other agencies responsible for the education of blind students in each State. The Quota accounts consist of funds from the APH appropriation in the form of credits that are allocated on the basis of the annual census of blind students to the ex officio trustees. Trustees may use the credits to order materials from APH. These materials are available for purchase by the trustees and the general public at <http://shop.aph.org>. The ex officio trustees are responsible for the administration of the Federal accounts in each State. Items to be produced and distributed by APH are reviewed by a six-member Educational Products Advisory Committee. 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, provides oversight and accountability regarding APH's outreach and support services.

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the States are required to provide a free appropriate public education, including appropriate related materials and supplies, to all students with disabilities. Materials provided through this appropriation supplement the various other resources 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 by the Federal Government for educational materials in fiscal year 2013 represented approximately 72 percent of the Printing House's total sales income of \$30.4 million. Total funding provided through the APH appropriation represented approximately 85 percent of APH's total budget of \$31.1 million. Federal grants and contracts from agencies such as the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped's Talking Book program represented another 12 percent of APH's total budget for fiscal year 2013. The remaining portion 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:

	(dollars in thousands)
2010 .....	\$24,600
2011 .....	24,551
2012 .....	24,505
2013 .....	23,223
2014 .....	24,456

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#### **FY 2015 BUDGET REQUEST**

The Administration requests \$24.5 million for activities to be conducted by the American Printing House for the Blind in fiscal year 2015. The request would maintain funding for APH at the fiscal year 2014 appropriation level. APH provides crucial educational aids at no cost to students who are blind and visually impaired. The materials developed, manufactured, and distributed by the Printing House offer States an additional resource to assist them with providing free appropriate public education to visually impaired students, as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Federal support of the APH also helps ensure that students who are visually impaired receive the accessible educational materials they need to succeed in school and prepare for college and careers. The Administration believes the request provides sufficient resources to support an adequate level of service in each of the three program areas: educational materials, advisory services, and research.

Educational Materials. The Administration's request includes \$18.5 million for educational materials, the same as the fiscal year 2014 level. Excluding non-quota funds from the Braille Improvement Project, the requested funding level provides an estimated \$305 per eligible student, the same level in fiscal year 2014. Materials produced by APH include include textbooks in braille, large type, and audio recording formats; educational aides such as braille typewriters, raised (tactile) graphics, and computer software and hardware; teaching tools such as tests and performance measures; and other special supplies. APH manufactures these instructional materials for a broad range of academic subjects and grade levels. In fiscal year 2013, 947 distinct educational products were available for purchase with Federal quota funds.

The timely delivery of textbooks in accessible media formats for braille-reading students is crucial to ensuring that children who are blind have the same access to a free appropriate public education as children without disabilities. In order to address this need, each year APH produces thousands of braille and large print textbooks on demand, including instructional materials featuring tactile graphics. APH issues industry standards for tactile graphics, manufactures and distributes graphics to students across the country, and maintains a Tactile Graphic Image Library in order to increase the variety and lower the cost of pictures and graphics included in accessible educational materials. Tactile graphics are particularly essential for teaching subjects such as geography and geometry. The funds requested for educational materials support APH's production of teaching modules and associated instructional materials in these subjects. The request also includes \$1.5 million for the Accessible Textbook Initiative. The goal of the Initiative is to deliver quickly custom-produced accessible textbooks in an assortment of media formats.

Advisory Services. The Administration requests \$1.6 million for advisory services for fiscal year 2015, the same as the fiscal year 2014 level. Advisory Services include a variety of activities that support the administration of the educational materials program area by the ex-officio trustees. These funds provide for the annual meeting of the ex-officio trustees; advisory group panels; 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, webinars, 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. APH also provides support and information to staff and teachers at schools around the country. In order to maximize the availability of its training and technical

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assistance activities, APH frequently conducts training through the internet. These web-based training sessions have given the Printing House the ability to reach a wide audience of those who want information and training in an efficient, low-cost manner.

Projects that would continue to be funded in fiscal year 2015 include the National Instructional Partnerships program, webcast product training series, APH Research Library, APH Web Site, Accessible Media Producers Database, and National Instructional Partnership with Teacher Training Programs. The APH Web site offers the public convenient on-line ordering of products, manuals and directions for using products, downloadable catalogs and newsletters, information on training events, online surveys, and online reference services such as the Louis Accessible Materials Database and APH file repository. In recent years, APH has integrated these unique databases and online tools to make them cross-searchable, user-friendly, and comprehensive sources of specialized information and resources on accessible instructional materials for the blind and visually impaired. The request provides sufficient funds to cover all advisory services activities the Printing House plans to conduct in fiscal year 2015.

Research and Product Development. The Administration's request for research in fiscal year 2015 is \$4.5 million, the same amount allocated for research in fiscal year 2014. APH undertakes applied and developmental research with the goal of developing innovative educational products for students who are blind or have low-vision. Major research initiatives include developing a full-page refreshable braille/tactile graphic display and a pedestrian-focused navigation system for visually impaired students. The refreshable braille display is an electronic tool that enables blind students to access independently information provided through text, charts, and pictorially presented data. The navigation system will utilize global positioning system (GPS) technology and other technologies to facilitate outdoor and indoor independent travel. These new products will represent major improvements over existing tools. APH is also increasingly investing in developing the file formats, software, hardware, and production infrastructure necessary to produce and deliver braille books through electronic files and e-readers rather than through paper books.

The Administration recognizes the need for APH to conduct developmental and applied research, so that it can continue to meet the changing needs of students who are blind and visually impaired, particularly as the technologies for producing accessible educational materials evolve rapidly. The request will provide funds for APH to conduct over 350 research projects in a wide range of content areas, including development of new products for use with infants, toddlers, and preschoolers who are visually impaired, materials for students who are visually impaired with secondary disabilities, equipment to assist students with low vision, materials for braille literacy, classroom learning aids, tactile graphics, and tools to aid in the transition from school to postsecondary educational or job settings.

Two examples of products recently developed by APH are the Building on Patterns program and the VisioBook. Building on Patterns is a complete primary literacy program designed to teach beginning braille users reading, writing, and spelling through a package of lessons, practice activities, and assessments. The VisioBook is a portable electronic magnifier and distance viewing tool for students of all ages who still have some sight. Students use this product to magnify the pages of books, read writing on a chalkboard from a distance, and in many other situations when magnification is needed to access educational content.

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Product development activities planned for fiscal year 2015 are categorized into eleven content areas: Adult Life, Braille, Core Curriculum, Cortical Visual Impairment, Early Childhood, Emergent Literacy, Low Vision, Multiple Disabilities, Tactile Graphics, Technology, and Tests and Assessments. The request includes funding for APH's Accessible Tests Department. The goals of this initiative are to:

- Provide tests, practice tests, examination administration manuals, and other assessment-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 the development of assessments.
- Enhance the test performance of blind and visually impaired individuals through research, education, and communication.

### **PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES** (dollars in thousands)

<u>Measures:</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
<u>Distribution of funding:</u> <sup>1</sup>			
Educational materials	\$17,723	\$18,456	\$18,456
Advisory services	1,500	1,550	1,550
Educational and technical research	<u>4,000</u>	<u>4,450</u>	<u>4,450</u>
Total	23,223	24,456	24,456
Number of eligible students	59,621	60,393	60,393
Average per student allotment (whole dollars) <sup>2</sup>	\$293	\$305	\$305
<u>Number of Services and products provided:</u>			
Products available with Federal funds	978	979	979
Advisory committee meetings	5	5	5
State educational agencies visited	18	12	12
Residential programs visited	12	10	9
Rehabilitation programs visited	7	7	8
In-service training programs and webcasts	31	33	30
Product training presentations and exhibits	126	125	120

<sup>1</sup> Figures for FY 2013 are actual data; FYs 2014 and 2015 are the best available estimates. For comparison purposes, the figures displayed reflect the original allocation of the appropriation and do not include subsequent reallocations of unused funds. Amounts displayed for FY 2013 do not include unused prior year funds of \$359,696 from Educational Materials, \$307,845 of which was unused in FY 2013 and reallocated to FY 2014. Funds were reallocated from FY 2012 to 2013, which resulted in an additional \$6.04 per student in FY 2013. In addition, in FY 2013, APH reallocated \$235,000 from Research and \$10,000 from Advisory Services to Educational Materials, which resulted in an additional \$4.11 per student.

<sup>2</sup> Funds used for the Braille Improvement Project support planning committees, staff certification courses, focus groups, and team meetings/workgroups related to the improvement of braille materials produced by APH, which is shown under Educational Materials. \$350,000 of funding in 2015 is not included as part of the calculation of the average per student allotment because it is not directly available to ex officio trustees for purchasing educational products for eligible students. The funds for the Accessible Textbook Initiative are included as part of the calculation of the per student share.

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<u>Measures:</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2015</u>
Visits to Ex Officio Trustees	20	15	15
Total employees (full-time equiv.)	297	300	300

## 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 2015 and future years, as well as the resources and efforts invested by those served by this program.

The Department and the Printing House have worked together to develop 10 performance measures for the activities carried out through the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind. Four of the indicators are customer satisfaction measures. Two are efficiency measures. Four indicators measure aspects of product quality.

**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.

*Trustees - Percentage who agree:*

Year	Target	Actual Extremely Mostly Somewhat	Detail				
			Extremely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not too Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
2010	98%	100%	55%	41%	4%	0%	0%
2011	98	99	59	36	4	1	0
2012	98	99	52	44	4	0	0
2013	98	99	56	39	6	0	0
2014	98						
2015	98						

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*Advisory Committee Members - Percentage who agree:*

Year	Target	Actual Extremely Mostly Somewhat	Detail				
			Extremely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not too Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
2010	100%	100%	66%	31%	3%	0%	0%
2011	100	100	67	33	9	0	0
2012	100	100	60	37	3	0	0
2013	100	100	57	43	0	0	0
2014	100						
2015	100						

*Consumers - Percentage who agree:*

Year	Target	Actual Extremely Mostly Somewhat	Detail				
			Extremely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not too Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
2010	96%	98%	49%	43%	6%	2%	0%
2011	96	100	56	35	9	0	0
2012	96	98	58	34	6	2	0
2013	96	98	50	43	6	2	0
2014	96						
2015	96						

*Teachers - Percentage who agree:*

Year	Target	Actual Extremely Mostly Somewhat	Detail				
			Extremely Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Not too Satisfied	Not at all Satisfied
2010	97%	98%	52%	40%	6%	2%	0%
2011	97	99	56	38	5	1	0
2012	97	98	54	38	6	1	1
2013	97	98	53	40	6	1	0
2014	97						
2015	97						

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**Additional Information:** APH gathered the data for these measures by administering an online survey to 402 respondents during fiscal year 2013. An external research firm assisted with the design of the survey. Respondents rated their satisfaction on a 5-point rating scale with the following range: (1) Not at all satisfied, (2) Not too satisfied, (3) Somewhat satisfied, (4) Mostly satisfied, and (5) Extremely Satisfied. The percentages shown for each measure are composed of the respondents from each group that were “Extremely satisfied,” “Mostly satisfied,” or “Somewhat satisfied” with all three dimensions of product satisfaction (quality, timeliness, and appropriateness for targeted audience).

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 APH are appropriate to the consumer’s needs, delivered in a timely manner, and of high quality. However, the same survey is not appropriate for measuring outcomes, such as 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 attributable to the availability of these materials. Therefore, in fiscal year 2010, the Department revised these measures to exclude what was formerly the last phrase of the measures (“...and allow blind students to benefit more fully from their educational programs”). The rest of the text of these measures remains unchanged.

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

**Measure:** The percentage of APH product sales revenue that is from new products.

Year	Target	Actual
2010	15%	35%
2011	15	27
2012	22	31
2013	22	45
2014	22	
2015	22	

**Additional Information:** This measure was developed 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 research department, which is determined by measuring the extent to which sales of new products surpass a minimum level of products sold. In fiscal year 2013, the Printing House significantly exceeded the established target level. APH established targets for the next several years based upon product development trends and an analysis of the average percentage that sales of new products represented of all APH product sales from 2005 to 2011. Actual data from recent years indicate that new products tend to be more technologically advanced, and therefore more expensive than older products. As a result, the percentage of sales revenue from newer products has consistently exceeded targets.

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**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
2010	4	4.7
2011	4	4.6
2012	4	4.5
2013	4	5.0
2014	4	
2015	4	

**Additional Information:** To determine the average relevance rating, a panel of experts, who are proposed by APH and approved by the Department, reviews a random sample of new products developed each year by the Printing House 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 average of the scores is the number reported in the actual column. In fiscal 2013, the panel’s average rating continued to exceed the “meets criteria” rating and increased from the prior year. The small variations in the average score from year to year may reflect the changing composition of the expert review panel and the sample of the products rated.

**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
2010	4	4.3
2011	4	4.2
2012	4	4.3
2013	4	4.4
2014	4	
2015	4	

**Additional Information:** The panel of experts annually reviews a random sample of new products developed each year by APH to assess whether: (1) appropriate research methodologies are being used consistent with the type of product being developed; (2) sufficient supporting information and evidence is collected by research data methods; (3) data are gathered from a geographically diverse U.S. population and a variety of potential user groups;

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(4) evaluation data are gathered from appropriately qualified individuals; (5) research data are gathered from an adequate number of sources; (6) development demonstrates use of field-reviewed data for modification to the product prior to final development; and (7) 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 2013 the average rating exceeded the “meets criteria” rating and increased slightly from the prior year. In response to concerns expressed by panel members in prior years, APH provided panel members during the 2013 rating process with more specific information about the research supporting each sampled product. However, panel members continued to express the need for additional research and data to determine if product development took account of all relevant research.

**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
2010	4	5.0
2011	4	4.7
2012	4	4.4
2013	4	5.2
2014	4	
2015	4	

**Additional Information:** For this measure, a panel of experts annually reviews 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.” In fiscal 2013, the average of the scores exceeded the targeted “meets criteria” rating, as compared to prior year levels.

### Efficiency Measures

The Department worked closely with the Printing House to develop appropriate efficiency measures for the Federal program at APH.

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**Measure:** The cost (in cents) per page to produce color large type textbooks.

Year	Target	Actual
2010	13.3¢	9.9¢
2011	13.0	9.4
2012	10.8	8.1
2013	10.8	9.3
2014	10.8	
2015	10.8	

**Additional Information:** Although the cost per page in fiscal year 2013 increased by 14.8 percent it was still well below the target. APH printed 9.9 million pages of color, large print type textbooks at a total cost of \$1.5 million in 2013. A number of factors affect the cost per page, including the costs of raw materials and equipment, demand for products, and efficiency of operations. Compared to fiscal year 2012, the pages of color large type textbooks produced decreased by 18.1 percent and production expenses decreased by 2.6 percent in fiscal year 2013, yielding an increase in cost per page. APH anticipates reduced demand for color large type textbooks in future years as a result of schools beginning to offer digital books on tablet computers and other electronic devices. The projected reduction in the volume of production of color large type textbooks will increase unit costs. To reflect both the reductions in production costs APH has already achieved and the projected decline in demand, the Department previously established a new target for fiscal year 2013 to be maintained subsequent years.

**Measure:** The cost (in cents) per page to produce braille textbooks.

Year	Target	Actual
2010	8.7¢	10.4¢
2011	8.5	10.5
2012	10.9	10.6
2013	11.0	15.2
2014	11.0	
2015	11.0	

**Additional Information:** In fiscal year 2013, the cost per page significantly increased compared to previous years. For fiscal year 2013, the total number of pages produced decreased by 1 million or 13.3 percent from the previous year. In addition, the total production cost increased by \$19,000, or 1.7 percent. As a result, the cost per page increased and the 2013 target was not met. APH expects demand for braille materials will remain steady during the next few years.

### Other Performance Information

The Department conducted a 2-day on-site monitoring visit to APH on June 10-11, 2013. The purpose of the visit was to examine APH's compliance with applicable requirements, its use of annual Federal appropriations "to manufacture and furnish books and other materials especially adapted for instruction of students who are blind," as authorized by the Act to Promote the

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Education of the Blind of March 3, 1879 (Act), 20 U.S.C. §§ 101-106a, review the quality of GPRA and other program data, and the performance of selected programs.

Topics covered during the on-site monitoring visit, included inquiries into the link between APH's *Strategic Plan: 2012-2014*, the proposed use of Federal funds for *Resources with Enhanced Accessibility for Learning Plan* (the REAL Plan), and the usefulness of current indicators used to measure APH's activities. The 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, APH reported that the APH's *Strategic Plan: 2012-2014* has four objectives: (1) identification of blind and visually impaired consumers' needs; (2) solicitation of ideas and development of products to meet consumer needs; (3) efficient management of manufacturing, marketing and distribution of products; and (4) the continuous review and evaluation of APH products and other products available for blind and visually impaired consumers.

In addition, APH reported that it created the *Resources with Enhanced Accessibility for Learning (REAL) Plan* in response to rapid transition of traditional textbooks to digital products delivered online, that are not accessible to students who are blind and visually impaired. APH's *REAL Plan* proposes four key strategies: (1) conversion of digital (XML-based) source files into multiple formats; (2) discovery tools through storage of the Louis Plus Database, Tactile Graphic Image Library, and APH Libraries in Amazon Cloud and Internet Archive; (3) content distribution through DAISY Online and partnerships with online libraries (Open Library); and (4) continuous improvement through ongoing feedback from the field. APH is expected to keep the Department fully informed of the institutions' activities as it implements the *Strategic Plan 2012-2014* and the *REAL Plan* and the implications for the Federal program and Federal funding.

A review of APH's GPRA data highlighted the need for new performance targets for many of the measures. APH agreed to propose new targets for Department review based on an examination of production trends and possible further improvements. The new targets cover fiscal years 2012 to 2016. APH also reported that it had simplified its customer satisfaction survey to focus on the questions needed to collect GPRA data. APH is expected, within 90 days from the date of the report, to submit to the Department a proposed new performance measure on the timeliness of braille textbook production. The Department issued a report of monitoring findings in December 2013.