

Department of Education
AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND
Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Request

CONTENTS

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

\$17,573,000.

Note—A regular 2007 appropriation for this account had not been enacted at the time the budget was prepared; therefore, this account is operating under a continuing resolution (P.L. 109-289, Division B, as amended). The amounts included for 2007 in this budget reflect the levels provided by the continuing resolution.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Amounts Available for Obligation
(\$000s)

	2006	2007	2008
<hr/>			
Discretionary appropriation:			
Appropriation	\$17,750	0	\$17,573
Across-the-board reduction	-178	0	0
CR annual rate	<u>0</u>	<u>\$17,573</u>	<u>0</u>
Subtotal, appropriation	17,573	17,573	17,573
Total, direct obligations.....	17,573	17,573	17,573

Obligations by Object Classification
(\$000s)

	2006	2007	2008
<hr/>			
Grants, subsidies, and contributions.....	\$17,573	\$17,573	\$17,573

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Authorizing Legislation
(\$000s)

Activity	2007 Authorized	2007 Estimate	2008 Authorized	2008 Request
American Printing House for the Blind <i>(20 U.S.C. 101 et seq.)</i>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$17,573</u>	<u>Indefinite</u>	<u>\$17,573</u>
Total definite authorization	0		0	
Total appropriation		17,573		17,573

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

Appropriations History
(\$000s)

	Budget Estimate to Congress	House Allowance	Senate Allowance	Appropriation
1999	\$8,256	\$8,661	\$8,661	\$8,661
2000	8,973	9,000	10,100	10,100
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			17,573 ¹
2008	17,573			

¹ A regular 2007 appropriation for this account had not been enacted at the time the budget was prepared; therefore, this account is operating under a continuing resolution (P.L. 109-289, Division B, as amended). The amounts included for 2007 in this budget reflect the levels provided by the continuing resolution.

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 2008 Authorization (\$000s): Indefinite

Budget Authority (\$000s):

<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>	<u>Change</u>
\$17,573	\$17,573	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 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 77.5 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 basic and applied research necessary to develop and improve instructional 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, Expert Database, and 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 as necessary to address specific issues.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

APH has 185 Federal Quota accounts administered by approximately 150 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 is 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 received through the Act represented approximately 64.1 percent of the Printing House's total sales income of \$20.44 million and 58.45 percent of its total budget of \$28.85 million in fiscal year 2005. Funds from Federal research grants and contracts with Federal agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service and the National Library Service Talking Book program of the Library of Congress represented about another 13.92 percent of APH's total budget for fiscal year 2005. Nongovernmental contracts and revenue from unsubsidized product sales to State and local agencies, direct sales to individuals who are blind, and private sector contract sales provided the remaining 27.63 percent of the Printing House's budget. In addition to sales, APH receives corporate and individual donations from the private sector and interest income from endowments and other investments. APH has also been designated by Congress as the recipient of a grant to run the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). The Printing House received a planning grant for NIMAC in fiscal year 2005 and a 5-year grant to implement the Center in fiscal year 2006.

Funding levels for the past 5 fiscal years were:

	(\$000s)
2003.....	\$15,399
2004.....	16,403
2005.....	16,864
2006.....	17,573
2007.....	17,573

FY 2008 BUDGET REQUEST

The Administration requests \$17.6 million for activities to be conducted by the American Printing House for the Blind in fiscal year 2008. The request would maintain funding at the fiscal year 2007 level. Given the extremely large increases previously provided to this program,

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

Governmentwide funding constraints, and lack of data on performance for this program, the Administration does not believe that an increase is warranted for fiscal year 2008. Over the past 10 years, from 1997 to 2007, funding for this program increased by \$10.9 million or 163 percent. However, the number of students served by APH increased by only 1,708 or 3 percent between 1997 and 2006. The Printing House is projecting an increase in the number served of only 517 students, or 0.9 percent between fiscal year 2006 and 2008.

Educational Materials. The request includes \$14.4 million for educational materials, the same amount provided for fiscal year 2007. 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 blind children have the same access to a free appropriate public education as their non-disabled peers. 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 \$500,000 for the Braille Textbook Improvement Project, the same as the amount requested by APH for this purpose for fiscal year 2008. The funds for this program come from the allocation for educational materials because they are used to help improve educational materials provided by APH, but are not included as part of the calculation of the per student share because the funds are not used to directly produce products.

The Printing House is designated by section 674 of the IDEA as the grantee for the National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). The NIMAC became fully operational on December 3, 2006. This Center provides files from publishers formatted according to the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS) to State and local educational agencies. The Department has worked closely with APH, the NIMAS technical assistance center (funded under the Technical Assistance and Dissemination authority (IDEA, Part D, Subpart 2, Section 663)), stakeholders in the publishing, visually impaired and learning disability communities, and State educational agencies and accessible media producers (aka conversion houses) in establishing the NIMAC.

The Administration believes that the availability of NIMAS files through NIMAC should reduce some of APH's up-front costs of obtaining and formatting files from publishers and the ultimate cost and time from order to delivery of APH products provided to schools and children with

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

disabilities. However, APH notes that portions of mathematics, science, geography, and other textbook files that do not use literary braille are not fully accessible using NIMAS because translation software that will provide accessible formats of graphical material does not currently exist. As the NIMAS files do not cover graphs, pictures, and other visual elements in these textbooks, additional effort continues to be necessary to produce a complete, accessible version of a book. The Printing House plans to coordinate the work of the APH File Repository with the NIMAC and changes are being made to the Repository to make it more compatible with the NIMAC. The NIMAC only houses NIMAS files. The File Repository houses files that have been converted to alternative formats. States and other consumers using the Repository will not have to duplicate the effort of converting or transcribing textbooks into braille because ones that have already been converted are available through the Repository.

The request for educational materials includes \$850,000 for the Accessible Textbook Initiative and Collaboration (ATIC) project, the same as the fiscal year 2007 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 vast 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. Started as a pilot in fiscal year 2003, the project went on-line at full capacity in fiscal year 2005. The funds for ATIC come from the allocation for educational materials and are included as part of the calculation of the per student share.

Advisory Services. The request includes \$1.3 million for Advisory Services, the same amount allocated for this activity for fiscal year 2007. Advisory Services 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.

Examples of projects that would continue to be funded in this area in fiscal year 2008 include the Expert Database and Consumer Use initiatives, *Louis* Database of Accessible Materials project, 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. APH announced a new internet-based student registration system in October 2005 that was implemented with the January 2006 count of eligible individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The Administration believes that the request provides sufficient funds to cover all advisory services activities.

Educational and Technical Research. The request would provide \$1.9 million for research in fiscal year 2008, the same amount provided for fiscal year 2007. This amount will fund a wide variety of 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

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

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 activities planned for fiscal year 2008 include: (1) developing an assessment system to monitor a student's progress in daily living skills such as food preparation, clothing management, and personal/environmental management that includes identifying strengths and areas needing improvement; (2) developing a set of braille materials to introduce older students to the skills required for literacy and standard braille; (3) developing a math manipulative that enables non-braille reading teachers to present math concepts to braille reading students; (4) developing activity books that address orientation and mobility for the early years; (5) producing a video showing examples of caregiver-child interactions that promote emergent literacy such as early communication, extended discourse, developing concepts, and interactive reading aloud; and (6) developing accessible graphing tools needed for creating bar graphs, pictographs, pie charts, Venn diagrams, etc. encountered in math and science textbooks to allow students to independently create graphs, charts, and graphical displays.

The request would provide \$200,000 for APH's Accessible Testing Program, which is the same as the amount for fiscal year 2007. The goal of this project is to provide tests, practice tests, test administration manuals, and other test-related materials in high quality accessible media and in a timely manner, to promote the inclusion of blind and visually impaired individuals during test development, and to enhance the test performance of blind and visually impaired individuals through research, education, and communication. A major focus of the initiative in fiscal year 2008 will be on the education of test publishers, test developers, 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. Fees collected from State educational agencies and test publishers help offset the cost of operating this program.

PROGRAM OUTPUT MEASURES (\$000s)

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Distribution of funding:			
Educational materials:			
Operations	\$12,945	\$13,018	\$13,018
Braille Textbook Improvement Project	573	500	500
Accessible Textbook Initiative (ATIC)	<u>850</u>	<u>850</u>	<u>850</u>
Subtotal	14,368	14,368	14,368
Advisory services	1,305	1,305	1,305
Educational and technical research:			
Operations	1,633	1,700	1,700
Accessible Testing Program	<u>267</u>	<u>200</u>	<u>200</u>
Subtotal	1,900	1,900	1,900
Total	17,573	17,573	17,573
Number of persons served	57,983	58,000	58,500
Average per student allotment (whole dollars)	\$237.91 ¹	\$239.10 ¹	\$237.06 ¹

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

	<u>2006</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2008</u>
Advisory committee meetings	5	5	5
Ad hoc committee and focus group meetings	18	18	18
State educational agencies visited	8	5	5
Residential programs visited	8	8	8
Rehabilitation programs visited	3	3	3
Teacher training programs visited	9	9	8
In-service training programs	71	60	60
Conference presentations	68	68	68
Catalogs distributed:			
Print catalogs	60,000	60,000	60,000
Cassette catalogs	2,500	600 ²	3,000
Disk catalogs (CD ROM)	5,000	5,000	5,000
<u>Total employees (full-time equiv.)</u>	<u>305 ³</u>	<u>305 ³</u>	<u>305 ³</u>

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.

² The large decrease estimated in cassette catalogs distributed in 2007 is because the new Adult Life Catalog is distributed on a biennial basis.

³ Excludes personnel assigned to the NIMAC project.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

Performance Measures

This section presents selected program performance information, including GPRA goals, objectives, measures, and performance targets and data; and an assessment of the progress made toward achieving program results. Achievement of targets is based on the cumulative effect of the resources provided in previous years and those requested in FY 2008 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 continues to have concerns that the data are subjective in nature and do not provide sufficient information on key outcomes. As described below and under the Follow-Up on PART Findings and Recommendations section, the Department and the Printing House have been working together to develop more objective, appropriate measures of outcomes for APH activities.

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

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
2003	96	98.75
2004	96	99.5
2005	98	100
2006	98	99
2007	98	
2008	98	

Advisory Committees-Percentage who agree

Year	Target	Actual
2003	100	100
2004	100	100
2005	100	100
2006	100	96
2007	100	
2008	100	

Consumers-Percentage who agree

Year	Target	Actual
2003	95	100
2004	95	99
2005	95	96
2006	96	98
2007	96	
2008	96	

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

<i>Teachers - Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2003	96	97
2004	96	98
2005	96	99
2006	97	100
2007	97	
2008	97	

Assessment of progress: The Department has expressed concerns regarding the usefulness of these measures. 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 is working with the Printing House on alternate measures that are intended to produce more objective and verifiable information on APH's performance. Depending on the results of field tests of the proposed new measures, we anticipate that some or all of the above surveys may be eliminated. APH anticipates having data for the above measures for school year 2006-2007 by October 2007.

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.		
<i>Trustees-Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2003	99	99.5
2004	99	100
2005	99	99.5
2006	99	99
2007	99	
2008	99	

<i>Teachers--Percentage who agree</i>		
Year	Target	Actual
2003	95	95
2004	95	99
2005	95	98.5
2006	96	100
2007	96	
2008	96	

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

Assessment of progress: As with the set of measures under the appropriate, timely, high quality of products measure, the Department has expressed concerns regarding the usefulness of this data. Satisfaction surveys provide some indication of the success of the program. However, the responses to these surveys are subjective, the ex officio trustees have a statutory connection to APH, and the teachers to be surveyed are identified by the ex officio trustees. The Department is working with the Printing House on ways to refine and improve these measures and to determine if additional or alternate measures can be developed to provide objective, verifiable information on APH's performance. APH anticipates having data for school year 2006-2007 available by October 2007.

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

Measure: The percentage of APH product sold that are new products.		
Year	Target	Actual
2003		6.5
2004		18.3
2005		15.4
2006		15.2
2007	12	
2008	12	

Assessment of progress: This new measure was developed in fiscal year 2006 to help determine the efficacy of new products developed by APH. The measure will evaluate the reaction of consumers to new products created by the APH research department and introduced by the Printing House by measuring the extent to which sales of new products represent an appropriate percentage of all products sold. This will be determined through an examination of sales data reported by the Printing House. APH has established an initial target of 12 percent based upon performance trends and an analysis of the average percentage that new products represent of all products offered by APH. Ongoing targets may be adjusted based on additional outcome data. Data for fiscal year 2007 will be available in October 2007.

Two additional new measures have been developed to determine: (1) the percentage of APH research deemed to be of high quality by an independent review panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise to review the substantive content of the research projects and (2) percentage of new APH products deemed to be of high relevance and utility for the target audience by an independent review panel of qualified experts or individuals with appropriate expertise related to the target audience.

Assessment of progress: These new measures were established in fiscal year 2006. The data will be based on annual independent expert panel reviews, which would assess the quality of research conducted by APH and the relevance and utility of the products it produces and distributes. The Office of Special Institutions reviewed the peer review and expert panel review procedures for the Institute of Education Sciences, Office of Special Education Programs, Rehabilitation Services Administration, and National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research and worked with the Printing House to assist in the development of appropriate

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

procedures for the APH expert panels. In fiscal year 2007, we expect to complete the first set of expert panel reviews and establish a baseline for each measure.

Efficiency Measures

The Department has been working closely with the Printing House to develop appropriate efficiency measures for the Federal program at APH. We have agreed on the following two measures for fiscal year 2007.

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

Explanation. In FY 2005, APH printed 21.9 million pages of large print, at the cost of \$3.2 million, which represented 17.3 percent of total sales. This efficiency measure will determine if production costs for color large type textbooks can be reduced by 10 percent over a 5-year period. The fiscal year 2006 production cost to produce color large type was budgeted at 14.5 cents per page. The objective is to reach 13.05 cents (14.5 cents less 10 percent) by the end of fiscal year 2011.

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

Explanation. In fiscal year 2005, APH printed 18.6 million pages of braille at the cost of \$1.8 million, which represented 12.2 percent of total sales. This measure will determine if production costs for braille textbooks can be reduced by 10 percent over a 5-year period. Specifically, the fiscal year 2006 budgeted production cost to produce braille (on the Braillo or similar computerized embosser) was budgeted at 9.5 cents per page. The objective is to reach 8.55 cents (9.5 cents less 10 percent) by the end of fiscal year 2011.

Follow-up on PART Findings and Recommendations

The Federal program at the Printing House underwent a PART review in fiscal year 2005. The program received a rating of "Results Not Demonstrated." The assessment determined that the purpose of the program is clear and unambiguous, it addresses a specific and existing need, and it is designed effectively so that resources address the program's purpose and reach the intended beneficiaries. However, the assessment found the annual and long-term performance measures that focus on key measures of program performance to be inadequate. Concerns were raised that APH does not measure the effectiveness of its educational materials, advisory services, or research; the Department lacks a formal schedule and mechanism to monitor the Federal program at the Printing House; and the Department has not evaluated the program to ensure that it is operating effectively and meeting the needs of its service population. Following

AMERICAN PRINTING HOUSE FOR THE BLIND

American Printing House for the Blind

is a discussion of some of the steps that have been taken by the Department and APH to address the steps outlined in the PART improvement plan.

- **The Printing House shall implement rigorous performance goals related to educational materials, advisory services, and educational and technical research and how they are positively affected as a result of APH activities.**

As discussed above, the Department has been working with the Printing House to review the methodology by which APH obtains its data to determine if the data validity can be improved, more accurate targets developed, or alternative measures developed. In addition, the Printing House and Department have developed five new measures (described above) that were added to the GPRA plan for fiscal year 2007. 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. We anticipate that, after the new outcome measures are successfully field tested, we will drop most or all of the measures that are based on survey data.

- **The Department will develop a formal mechanism and schedule for monitoring the federally funded programs for compliance with the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind.**

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services has developed a monitoring plan to obtain additional information from APH and improve oversight provided by the Department. The plan includes regular site visits and activities necessary to document the actual use of funds, assess program data quality, and assess the Institute's compliance with the Act to Promote the Education of the Blind. We have met with APH staff to discuss the PART findings, GPRA plan for the Printing House, and proposed monitoring activities. The Department expects to implement the new monitoring activities in fiscal year 2007 and conduct a detailed on-site monitoring visit in spring 2007.

- **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 new performance measures discussed above will 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. In addition, the Department has worked with the Printing House to develop five new measures that are being implemented in fiscal year 2007, including two new efficiency measures. We believe that these measures and the new oversight procedures should be sufficient to assess the scope and quality of the program to ensure that it is operating effectively, addressing its statutory purpose, and achieving results. Following the implementation of these activities, we will make a determination as to whether any additional evaluation activities are necessary.