

FAST **FACTS**

*Recent Statistics from the
Library Research Service*

Planning for Results: How to Find Community Analysis Information on the WWW

The Public Library Association (PLA) introduced a new publication recently called *Planning for Results*. With this how-to manual, library directors and staff encounter a new set of forms and questions to answer. Many library decision makers have little time or resources to address planning and would be discouraged by having to search for answers to detailed statistical questions about their communities. With this in mind, the Library Research Service (LRS) began a pilot project to help managers with the Community Scan form.

Public library planning committees must have accurate information about their communities in order to make recommendations that will impact library service in the future. Questions such as "what is the percentage of unemployed people in your community?" or "approximately how many home-based businesses are in your community?" can take time to answer. In an effort to create a helpful one-stop resource, the LRS has produced an online document with embedded links on our Web site at <http://www.lrs.org/html/commscan.htm>

This document is based on the Community Scan form created for PLA. Each question asked has a link to a reliable source to help collect the needed data. For example, to answer the question, "what percent of the people living in your community are between the ages 18 & 24 years," we provide a link to Census Bureau County Population Estimates by Selected Age Group. Consulting this source, a member of the planning committee for the Douglas Public Library District would find that 6,604 people in that county are between these ages.

How much time might it take to answer the question, "about how many home-schooled students are there in your community?" The answer is one click away at the Colorado Department of Education's State Trends in Home Schooling page, where data is available by Colorado county and district for 1991-97.

Presently, this online document is customized for Colorado libraries. The LRS is seeking funding to support the addition of links for other states, where needed. In addition, we are working on creating a Library Scan form with embedded links similar to the Community Scan form described above. We hope to release the Library Scan form this fall.

Please contact Rochelle Logan at 303-866-6877 or rlogan@du.edu to share comments and suggestions for improving this form. We want it to be a useful resource now and in the future as you compile information in the planning for results process.

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