

NOVEMBER 2023

ABRAHAM LINCOLN NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

Evaluation Findings

Prepared by:
THE EPPLEY INSTITUTE FOR
PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN

Prepared for:
UNITED STATES
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Washington, D.C.



Acknowledgements

The following individuals contributed to the development of this report:

Kristina R. Anderson, PhD
Kristin Brethova
Stephanie Freeman-Day
Stephen A. Wolter
Michelle Ying

Recommended Citation

Anderson, K.R., Brethova, K., & Wolter, S. (2023). *Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area Evaluation Findings*. Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Executive Summary/Key Findings 6
 - Purpose of Report..... 7
 - Key Findings 7
- Section 1: Introduction..... 9
 - 1.1 National Heritage Areas 10
 - 1.2 Report Purpose 11
 - 1.3 The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area..... 11
 - 1.4 Evaluation Methodology.....12
 - 1.4.1 Overview12
 - 1.4.2 Tailoring the Evaluation Design12
 - 1.4.3 Data Collection and Initial Review12
 - 1.4.4 Data Analysis and Findings Document Writing.....12
 - 1.4.5 Data Collection Methods12
 - 1.4.6 Limitations..... 16
 - 1.5 Roles.....17
 - 1.5.1 External Evaluator17
 - 1.5.2 The National Park Service17
 - 1.5.3 Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition.....17
- Section 2: Abraham Lincoln NHA Overview 18
 - 2.1 The Land of Lincoln & the Abraham Lincoln NHA..... 19
 - 2.1.1 History of the Region & Lincoln’s Time in Illinois.....21
 - 2.1.2 Current Characteristics of the Region 22
 - 2.1.3 The “Lincoln Landscape” 24
 - 2.2 Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition 25
 - 2.2.1 Mission and Vision 25
 - 2.2.2 Organizational Structure & Governance 25
 - 2.2.3 Communities.....29
 - 2.2.4 Partners.....29
 - 2.3 Timeline30
- Section 3: Abraham Lincoln NHA Fulfillment of the Authorizing Legislation and Management Plan 32
 - 3.1 Goals and Objectives 33
 - 3.2 Activities and Impacts..... 36
 - 3.2.1 Interpretation and Education Activities 36
 - 3.2.2 Community Building..... 45

3.2.3 Marketing & Promotion.....	47
3.2.4 Sustainability	51
3.3 Summary and Assessments of Impact	53
3.4 Relationship with the National Park Service.....	57
Section 4: Public/Private Investments in ALNHA and Their Impacts.....	58
4.1 Designating Legislation	59
4.2 Investments in NHA Activities.....	60
4.2.1 Non-federal Matching Funds	62
4.3 Use of Financial Resources	65
4.3.1 Operational Expenses.....	65
4.3.2 Program Expenses	66
4.4 Impact of Investments.....	66
4.4.1 Economic Impact	67
Section 5: Successes and Sustainability of the Abraham Lincoln NHA.....	69
5.1 Defining Sustainability.....	70
5.2 Honoring the Legislative Mandate	70
5.3 Management Capacity of the ALNHA.....	70
5.3.1 Governance, Leadership, and Oversight.....	71
5.3.2 Strategy Planning and Adaptive Management	72
5.3.3 Monitoring and Record Keeping.....	73
5.4 Partnerships	73
5.5 Financial Sustainability	74
5.6 Sustainability Summary	76
Appendices	77
Appendix A – Designating Legislation	77
Appendix B – Boundary Expansion Legislation	84
Appendix C – FY2022 List of Partners	85
Appendix D – Evaluation Methodology.....	88
Community Input Prompts	88
Data Domain Matrix.....	89
Appendix E – Calculation of In-Kind Investments	96
References	97

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY/KEY FINDINGS



*Bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln at the Illinois State Capitol, in Springfield, Illinois.
Photo by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.*

Purpose of Report

This report evaluates the status of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area (ALNHA) through the work of its local coordinating entity, Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition (LFL). The National Park Service defines National Heritage Areas (NHAs) as “places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes” (2016, p. 1). The ALNHA was established by Congress in 2008 by Public Law 110-229. LFL was designated as its local coordinating entity at that time. The ALNHA is one of 62 National Heritage Areas across the United States. Spanning forty-three counties in central Illinois and two communities in the northern and southern regions of the state, the ALNHA is one of the largest NHAs in the country.

LFL’s mission is “to tell the quality stories of Abraham Lincoln’s life and times to provide high quality experiences for visitors, economic opportunities for communities and to improve the quality of life for residents” (LFL, 2023). LFL is responsible for meeting the purposes, goals, and objectives of the heritage area’s authorizing legislation and approved management plan.

This evaluation was required by Public Law 11-229 and guided by the National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide (2016), a document developed by the National Park Service with input from NHA representatives. The evaluation seeks to answer three key questions:

1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?
2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?
3. How do the Heritage Area’s management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

This report is divided into five sections. Section 1 introduces the evaluation process and the context in which the evaluation is conducted. Section 2 is an overview of the ALNHA, including a history and description of the region; a summary of the “Lincoln Landscape”; a detailed description of LFL, including its mission, vision, organizational structure, governance, communities, and partners; and a timeline of the LFL and the ALNHA. Section 3 answers the first of the three research questions above, with Sections 4 and 5 answering questions 2 and 3, respectively. The evaluation was conducted by the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University Bloomington.

The evaluation spans the years 2008-2022; it was conducted in 2023. The ALNHA’s authority to receive financial assistance from the NPS was reauthorized in early 2023 while this evaluation was in progress.




Key Findings

The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, as managed by Looking for Lincoln, has honored the legislative purposes and management goals made at its outset. Its Board of Directors, staff, communities, and partners all play an important role in telling quality stories, providing high quality experiences, fostering economic opportunities, and improving the quality of life for residents across the ALNHA. Its staff is highly competent and dedicated; they are key elements in LFL’s role as an important and central hub for communication, resources, funding, and relationship-building across institutions.

Table 1 outlines key findings illustrated throughout the Evaluation Plan. The “Documented Evidence” summarizes analyses in Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this report; the “Response” to each evaluation question indicates that the ALNHA has met the expectations set out for it. Over the course of approximately a decade, the ALNHA, through the work of LFL, has resulted in clear impact across the central Illinois region.

Because of the documented successes outlined in Table 1—and described in further detail in the sections that follow—the evaluation team encourages LFL leadership to think about areas of growth and future sustainability. While not an exhaustive list, a few reflective questions they might consider include: “How can we build programmatic sustainability into our interpretive and educational activities long-term?” (Section 3), “Given that LFL has consistently met its required match requirements, how can the organization continue to plan for long-term financial sustainability, perhaps by diversifying its funding sources?” (Section 4), “In what ways can the organization’s leadership further build the organization’s operational sustainability?” (Section 5). Anticipating, and then answering, questions such as these can aid the organization in furthering its sustainability and achieving its mission, authorized purposes, and outlined goals.

Table 1: Summary of Key Findings

Evaluation Question	Documented Evidence	Evaluation Response
<p>1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong quantitative and qualitative evidence of impact in the activity areas of Interpretation and Education, Community Building, Marketing and Promotion, and Sustainability, which align with its authorizing legislation and management plan. • Serves as a crucial and important hub, building and maintaining relationships between the National Park Service, communities, and organizations across the heritage area. • See Section 3 for additional detail. 	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Overall assessment: LFL has made extensive impact across activity areas, although some goals were ambitious or hard to measure (e.g., long-term sustainability of communities across the ALNHA), See Section 3.3 for further detail.</p>
<p>2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nearly doubled the impact of federal NPS-NHA funding recently. For every \$1 received from NPS-NHA funding over the last 5 years, LFL leveraged an additional \$1.80 from non-federal sources. • Through its activities and strategies, uses investments to realize the purposes outlined in the authorizing legislation and goals outlined in the management plan. • Serves as a valuable mechanism for pass-through funding to support communities and other organizations. • Supports communities as source of funding, capacity building, and marketing-promotion efforts. • See Section 4 for additional detail. 	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Overall assessment: Due to the investments made in it, LFL makes substantial programmatic impact across the ALNHA. In addition, LFL has met its federal grant match requirements annually. Of note, match is largely met via in-kind resources, which means that LFL is primarily dependent on federal NPS-NHA funding. See Section 4.4 for further detail.</p>
<p>3. How do the Heritage Area’s management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a robust management structure with an effective Board of Directors and highly competent, passionate staff. The team is strategic and adaptive in its work, as well as diligent in its record keeping. • Maintains strong partner relationships with a diverse group of formal and informal partners that represent many of the key institutions in the “Lincoln Landscape,” as well as designated communities across the ALNHA. These partnerships catalyze impacts across the ALNHA. • Makes strategic decisions regarding staff size and maintenance of a “rainy day” fund, which aid in the organization’s sustainability. LFL leverages (a) other funding sources to support individual projects and (b) in-kind contributions to achieve its mission. • See Section 5 for additional detail. 	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Overall assessment: The Heritage Area’s strong management structure, extensive partner relationships, and current funding model all contribute to the sustainability of the organization. See Section 5.6 for further detail.</p>

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION



Mixed media art piece by a local artist and purchased at the Decatur Area Arts Council.
Photo by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.

Note. Piece is superscribed with Lincoln’s quote: “Am I not destroying my enemies when I make friends of them?” While an abstract piece, the evaluation team found the piece to be an indirect form of evidence that the nation’s 16th president is still relevant in the public consciousness across the ALNHA.

1.1 National Heritage Areas

The United States Congress designates National Heritage Areas as “places where historic, cultural, and natural resources combine to form cohesive, nationally important landscapes” (NPS, 2016, p. 1).

As of 2023, there are 62 National Heritage Areas (NHAs) across 36 U.S. states and territories, as well as more than forty “emerging areas” in various stages of progression (i.e., several active feasibility studies in progress), which would add to the system of NHAs. NHAs are designated to support a variety of education, preservation, recreation, heritage tourism, and conservation activities. NHAs differ from national park units in that they are large, lived-in geographic areas; this allows them to coordinate and collaborate with communities and community groups in order to make heritage relevant to local interests and needs. These grassroots connections increase linkages between natural landscapes and cultural heritage and contribute to a sense of place and community, while attracting visitors, increasing economic opportunities in the area, and promoting local businesses. In short, they are a “grassroots, community-driven approach to heritage conservation and economic development” (National Park Service, 2020b, paragraph 1).

Organizationally, the National Park Service (NPS) administers and provides oversight to NHAs, but they are not NPS units nor directly managed by the federal government. NPS distributes federal funds appropriated by Congress, provides technical assistance, and partners with a local coordinating entity that oversees management of the NHA. Typically, local coordinating entities are non-federal, usually nonprofit, organizations. The local coordinating entities are tasked with (1) the development and coordination of partnerships and (2) the implementation of projects and programs pursuant to the goals of the NHA.

The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, primarily known as Looking for Lincoln (LFL), is the local coordinating entity for the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area (ALNHA). It was designated by Congress in the heritage area’s founding legislation in 2008 (Public Law 110-229). LFL’s Management Plan outlines (Looking for Lincoln, 2012, chapter 1-5):

The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, an independent non-profit organization, is the “local coordinating entity” for the heritage area as designated in its enabling legislation. The Coalition’s role is to develop and oversee programs; manage day-to-day operational affairs; coordinate the participation and work of partners; and apply heritage area criteria, guidelines, and standards. The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition will also undertake certain heritage area-wide actions in support of partnership activities. Most projects, however, will be undertaken by local partners within their own communities under the auspices of heritage area programming.

One distinction to make here is how LFL and the ALNHA are differentiated due to institutional history, timeline, brand identity, and stakeholder perceptions. Generally, “Looking for Lincoln” is most frequently used in reference to programming and overall organizational management; in contrast, ALNHA generally refers to the heritage area’s geographic region. As a result, this report seeks to align usage of each with accurate context and application. Additional explanation regarding their distinction can be found in Section 2.2.2 – Organizational Structure and Governance.

1.2 Report Purpose

The National Park Service (NPS) uses evaluation findings to “assess the accomplishments, investments, and sustainability of NHAs and to make recommendations to Congress about the role of NPS with regard to NHAs” (2016). This evaluation of the ALNHA is required by an act of Congress (Appendix A).

The evaluation and its findings are centered around three guiding questions outlined in the National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide (2016). Those questions are:

1. Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the heritage area achieved its proposed accomplishments?
2. What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local governments, and private entities?
3. How do the heritage area’s management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?

These questions are explored in Sections 3, 4, and 5 of this report, respectively. This report was prepared on behalf of the National Park Service by the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University Bloomington.

1.3 The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area

The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area (ALNHA) is one of the largest NHAs in the country, encompassing forty-three counties in central Illinois and approximately half the state of Illinois. It was designated by Congress as a National Heritage Area in 2008 and is the only NHA named for and centered on a person, United States President Abraham Lincoln (Appendix A). In 2019, through P.L. 116-9 Section 6002, Congress expanded the ALNHA boundaries to include Livingston County, Freeport, and Jonesboro; this facilitated the inclusion of three additional sites important to Lincoln’s legal career in the ALNHA, including two Lincoln-Douglas debate sites (Appendix B). The ALNHA seeks to tell the stories of Lincoln’s life and times in Illinois and is home to a variety of Lincoln-related sites, including two NPS units—the Lincoln Home National Historic Site and New Philadelphia National Historic Site.

According to ALNHA’s local coordinating entity, Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition (LFL), “The Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area is focused on the 30 years Lincoln lived in central Illinois, raising his family and pursuing his passion for the law and politics... We believe that his journey is our enduring legacy” (2023, paragraph 4). Lincoln’s years in Illinois ultimately prepared him to become president at a time that required facing unprecedented challenges in American history, including the Civil War and slavery. The heritage area is home to the seven communities that hosted the Lincoln-Douglas debates, where Lincoln famously debated Steven A. Douglas for a seat in the 1858 State Senate and which provided a model for current presidential debates.

The ALNHA area differs from many other NHAs in that while the focus and mission of the area includes sites and stories unique to the region, it primarily focuses on the legacy of the life and times of a historical figure, rather than a place. The National Park Service describes the ALNHA as being “home to a very unique collection of American history, [sharing] a deeper look inside the life and times of Abraham Lincoln in central Illinois... The heritage area also highlights the people and the stories that shaped him to lead our nation through issues of unity, equality and race relations, and democratic ideals... Each community in the heritage area has its own Lincoln story to tell in the form of artifacts, folklore, screenscapes, buildings, and living landscapes. Together, they bring an immediacy and tangible quality to the powerful Lincoln legacy” (2020a).

1.4 Evaluation Methodology

1.4.1 Overview

An evaluation of the ALNHA was required by Public Law 110-229. The NPS National Heritage Area Evaluation Guide (2016) was used to guide and structure this evaluation including documentation, meetings, interviews, and report structure. The guide is designed to assess elements that are common across National Heritage Areas, but also be adaptable and aware of each area's unique story and context.

Throughout this report, the acronyms ALNHA and LFL will be used. Generally, ALNHA will be used when referencing the federally designated, geographic unit (i.e., forty-three county, 2-municipality region). In contrast, LFL will be used when referencing completion of work or activities, as it is this nonprofit who is enacting the work of/within the ALNHA.

1.4.2 Tailoring the Evaluation Design

This phase consisted of a series of activities, as outlined in the Evaluation Guide and implemented via the Eppley Institute-NPS project plan, including but not limited to: Background review and participation in initial events (e.g., introductions, project planning kick-off call, Meet and Greet call), evaluation design (i.e., development of the logic model and data domain matrix), and initial collection and review of data such as NPS Annual Reports, the ALNHA workplan, and other key documents, including many financial records.

1.4.3 Data Collection and Initial Review

Provision and review of data was ongoing during this phase. Documents were shared by Looking for Lincoln staff related to topics such as additional financial records, descriptions of organizational structure and operations, visitor guides, plans (interpretation plans, management plan, human resource policies), memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with LFL communities, legal documents, and legislation.

During this time, three visits were conducted March 21-24, 2023; April 19-22, 2023; and May 31-June 3, 2023. From March to late May 2023, topic-centered interviews with sixteen individuals were conducted. Analysis of financial records also began during this time and continued into Phase 3. Supplementary information to illustrate and quantify programming was also identified and reviewed.

1.4.4 Data Analysis and Findings Document Writing

Documents collected in the prior phase were read and analyzed during this phase, with a focus on organizational structure, processes and procedures, revenue and revenue sources, year-to-year comparisons, programming and attendance, and other indicators of activity, financials, and impact. Members of the evaluation team synthesized and wrote findings into a draft report. After review by LFL and NPS NHA Program staff, the draft report was refined, utilizing comments and any corrections gathered during review, and finalized for submission.

1.4.5 Data Collection Methods

This evaluation featured a multi-method case study design which allowed for investigating a unit (i.e., an organization like LFL) in depth and within its real-life context (Yin, 2017). Data sources were largely qualitative, including documentation, interviews, community input, and observation-based evidence; however, some of this data, primarily financial records, allowed for quantitative analysis. These multiple forms of data were employed to complement and provide greater context to the findings from any one source rather than only seeking convergence through multiple instances identified via patterns.

In particular, analysis of financial records relied most heavily on annual IRS 990 tax returns from 2008-2022 and Annual Reports submitted to the NPS from 2008-2022 (although the format of the latter changed over time). Cooperative agreements and their modifications,

grant agreements, internal LFL accounting of expenses by program area, and an economic impact analysis conducted by Tripp Umbach (2017) were also employed. Data from these records were examined for trends over time, types of income sources, comparison of revenues and expenses, calculation of match and match ratios, review of cash and in-kind contributions, and other analyses.

Documentation

In preparing this report, the Eppley Institute research project team reviewed an extensive array of documentation. These documents included:

- Annual financial statements and reports, including Internal Revenue Service tax returns and grant agreements with grantor agencies.
- Annual reports, including annual reports to the NPS, community annual report summaries, and progress reports.
- Legal documents, including the ALNHA's founding legislation, bylaws, and cooperative agreements between partner organizations, the National Park Service, and LFL.
- Items related to organizational structure and operations, such as partner records, lists of ad-hoc committees and committee members, maps of the ALNHA, and charts related to the roles and responsibilities of the Steering Council and Board of Directors.
- Additional guides, plans, and reports including two economic impact studies, the management plan, interpretive plans, workplans, annual visitors guides, and policies including Looking for Lincoln's Human Resources manual and administrative and financial policies manual, and LFL Community memoranda of understanding.
- Other supporting documentation, particularly program-related records and resources.

Interviews

Interviews allow for the collection of rich data and examples through dialogue. Most interviews reflected a semi-structured interview format, which allowed for both eliciting specific information and adapting to the respondent in the moment (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Through engaging in dialogue, meanings and constructions can be better understood (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Each interview began with identification of questions from the NHA Evaluation Guide (2016) that were relevant to the individual and the role or institution they represented. These were supplemented with some modifications and additions reflecting a bespoke approach, wherein due to the individual's role or institutional context, targeted, custom questions were incorporated. That said, the order and exact wording of questions differed in each interview; and some questions were omitted, others added on the spot (i.e., an "emerging question.") This methodology allowed the research team to engage in dialogue with interviewees. These three types of questions are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Example Interview Questions by Type

NHA Evaluation Questions	Bespoke (Custom) Questions	Emerging Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you briefly describe the nature of your relationship with the NHA and its coordinating entity? • Can you tell me what you think have been the greatest successes and most serious challenges across the history of the NHA? • Could you describe the types of assistance and other types of non-financial support your organization has received from the NHA coordinating entity? • Could you describe how your organization's program activities contribute to the NHA's unique story? • How would [activity] be affected if the NPS NHA federal funding sunsets or is reduced? [Follow up: Are there other organizations in the community who also provide this activity in a way that supports the Heritage Area?] 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How have you seen Looking for Lincoln change over time? • How did you first get to know or connect with the LFL team? • What would you like to see for LFL's future? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What would you say are some [similarities/ differences] between LFL and [your organization] in terms of mission or programs? • What would you say are LFL's hallmark programs or things they do very well? • Do you have anything else you would like to add?

Following the process for identification of interviewees, the Eppley Institute team worked with LFL staff to identify individuals to invite. Prior to determining this list, the Eppley Institute shared the three categories of interviewees targeted and recommended via the NHA Evaluation Guide: NHA Coordinating Entity Staff, NHA Coordinating Entity Leadership, and NHA Partners. This resulted in a list of seventeen initial individuals; ultimately, fifteen individuals participated (those who did not participate either were unable to be reached or did not have capacity to participate).

Interviews were conducted with the following individuals and organizations. Interview duration typically took 30-60 minutes, depending on the individual, list of questions, available time, and other factors. Of note, several interviews were conducted with ALNHA staff, including some individual (1:1) and some group interview conversations.

- Sarah Watson, Executive Director, Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition
- Heather Feezor, Program Manager, Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition
- Jeanette Carlson, Business Manager, Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition
- Justin Blandford, Superintendent, Illinois Department of Natural Resources – State Historic Sites in Springfield, LFL Steering Council member
- Guy Fraker, Attorney and author, former LFL Board Chair
- Timothy Good, Superintendent, NPS Lincoln Home National Historic Site

- Teri Hammel, Executive Director, Decatur County Visitors Bureau, LFL Steering Council member
- Kathryn Harris, Interim Director, Lincoln Library (Springfield's public library), former Division Manager, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum
- Jock Hedblade, Executive Director, Macomb County Visitors Bureau, LFL Steering Council and ad-hoc committee member
- Linda Hileman, volunteer community representative, Anna-Jonesboro LFL Community, LFL Steering Council member
- Collin Hitt, Executive Director, Policy Research in Missouri Education (PRiME) Center at Saint Louis University, LFL Board Chair
- Erin Mast, President and Chief Executive Officer, Lincoln Presidential Foundation
- Sue Richter, Director, Vermillion County Museum, LFL Steering Council member
- Chuck Scholz, Attorney, Scholz and Scholz LLP, former LFL Board member
- Samuel Wheeler, Director of History Programs, Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Commission, former LFL Steering Council and ad-hoc committee member

Community Input

The NHA Evaluation Guide (2016) also includes intercept conversations with members of the community as part of the methodology, although the degree to which these input opportunities can be structured and evaluated is limited due to Office of Management and Budget Paperwork Reduction Act requirements. The guide recommends that these conversations occur at the Heritage Area office or at an event or place within the community.

As a result, the Eppley Institute team conducted intercept conversations with residents and visitors in the NHA community on several occasions, both scheduled and unscheduled. Unscheduled opportunities to collect community input also occurred during site visits; examples of these conversations included chatting with Springfield visitors who were approached when they were reading a Looking for Lincoln wayside, asking a local artist about their Lincoln art while visiting a Decatur, Illinois, art gallery (piece profiled at start of this section), and other impromptu opportunities.

Scheduled community input sessions occurred over two visits and three days and included (1) visitors to the Lincoln Home National Historic Site (with permission), (2) attendees of the New Philadelphia film premiere (event held at the Lincoln Home National Historic site and organized by LFL), and (3) attendees of the Lincoln Days Civil War Reenactment (LFL Signature Event at Lake Pittsfield). During these sessions, the profile of community members engaged was (1) slightly more than half first-time visitors (in contrast to repeat visitors) and (2) approximately half from out of state (otherwise, approximately 20% from the local area and 30% from elsewhere in the state).

Among the scheduled community input sessions, topics included:

- Residency status & community member characteristics
- Reasons for visiting the ALNHA
- Takeaways from ALNHA visit
- Awareness & familiarity of ALNHA and its activities
- Awareness & familiarity with local coordinating entity LFL

Observation

The Eppley Institute evaluation team also engaged in observations of LFL's programs and activities across the Heritage Areas in order to provide context and examples to the evaluation and its findings. These observations included:

- Community observations, such as at waysides and other historic sites in Springfield, Bloomington, Decatur, Danville, Pittsfield, and Charleston
- Podcast series listening (several episodes)
- Looking for Lincoln Conversation attendance (virtual program)
- New Philadelphia film premiere attendance (LFL sponsored event)
- Lincoln Days Civil War Reenactment (LFL Signature Event at Lake Pittsfield)

1.4.6 Limitations

Throughout this evaluation the Eppley team endeavored to be collaborative, transparent, thorough, and accurate. Concomitantly, several explanations and observations warrant discussion with respect to the evaluation's limitations.

First, each NHA is unique, and with its large geographic area and unique focus on an individual, the ALNHA is particularly so. As a result, and in alignment with the guidance provided in the NPS Evaluation Guide (2016), the Eppley team sought to describe the work of LFL rather than make comparisons to other NHAs. In addition, the Eppley team focused on serving as evaluators, rather than auditors, and relied on provided documents and LFL-reported information.

The Eppley team also endeavored to focus on the outlined research questions and methodology. One example of potential scope creep that was monitored during the evaluation was information regarding future initiatives, direction, or management of the NHA. While this information was weaved into the relevant results as supplemental context, it was not the priority of the study, which prioritized a retrospective evaluation of documented data to date. Another illustration of this was other feedback that recommended the Eppley team consider investigating some of the underlying assumptions, such as those driving how match is calculated. In this example, given that the LFL documented their match data well and followed NPS match guidance (National Park Service, 2023a), we did not further evaluate these underlying calculations. Similarly, at one point a question was raised regarding how the economic impact of the ALNHA is determined; however, given that this was the focus and methodology of another documented evaluation (Umbach, 2017), the present evaluation summarized but did not expand on that topic.

The aforementioned data collection methods described a mixed method approach; given the nature of the data sources, most quantitative data derived from financial records and reports, whereas most qualitative data derived from interviews, community input, and some reports. Given this, the sample size of the latter formats generally did not allow for statistical inferences from interview data or community input feedback; to that end, Office of Management and Budget regulations regarding data collection from members of the public did not allow for that type of data collection or subsequent analysis. Furthermore, some measures that could be indicators of LFL's impact—such as the number of visitors to a Lincoln site in one of ALNHA's designated communities—can be difficult to track due to the nature of many communities (often volunteer-based) or the sites themselves (e.g., part of a public park space, in which case visitation could be inflated).

The project schedule also influenced some elements of the evaluation. While initiated in October with early project planning and coordination, most evaluation work did not start until January; however, the Evaluation Team does not think this delay substantively influenced the project schedule or deliverables. Additionally, due to the nature of the original contract (10

months), some opportunities for data collection extended beyond the project timeline (i.e., public input was collected at a Lincoln Days event in June, rather than the Illinois State Fair in August).

1.5 Roles

1.5.1 External Evaluator

The study was conducted by the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands (Eppley Institute), part of the Indiana Institute for Disability and Community at Indiana University Bloomington (IUB). The Eppley Institute is an IUB research center that has provided evidence-based training, planning, and research for parks and public land agencies since its founding 30 years ago. The evaluation was led by project co-Principal Investigator, Dr. Kristina R. Anderson, Assistant Research Scientist at the Eppley Institute under the direction of Institute Director and Principal Investigator (PI) Stephen A. Wolter.

1.5.2 The National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) entered into a cooperative agreement with the external evaluator through the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU) Network to conduct the assessment of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area, supplied the necessary funding and underlying methodology used to conduct the assessment, and provided technical guidance and review. NPS staff (Christopher Stein, Susan Teel, and Kathleen Durcan), facilitated contact with the ALNHA local coordinating entity and the heritage area.

1.5.3 Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition

As ALNHA's local coordinating entity, Looking for Lincoln was instrumental in providing documentation, context, and a wealth of knowledge on the NHA's operations, history, partners, and activities. External Evaluators had regular project meetings with all full-time Looking for Lincoln staff members: Sarah Watson (Executive Director), Heather Feezor (Program Manager), and Jeanette Carlson (Business Manager).

SECTION 2: ABRAHAM LINCOLN NHA OVERVIEW



*Looking for Lincoln signage outside the Vermillion County Museum.
Photo by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.*

2.1 The Land of Lincoln & the Abraham Lincoln NHA

One of the largest National Heritage Areas in the country, the ALNHA encompasses forty-three counties and two cities in the northern part (Freeport) and southern part (Jonesboro) of the state (Figure 1). It comprises approximately half of the state of Illinois. Within its borders is a wide variety of locations, historic sites, tourism spots, and more, including:

- 43 Counties (Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Champaign, Christian, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, DeWitt, Douglas, Edgar, Fayette, Fulton, Greene, Hancock, Henderson, Jersey, Knox, LaSalle, Livingston, Logan, McLean, McDonough, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, Mason, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Peoria, Piatt, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby, Tazewell, Vermilion, Warren, and Woodford)
- 2 Cities (Freeport & Jonesboro)
- 29 Looking for Lincoln Communities
- 2 Units of the National Park Service
- 17 National Historic Landmarks
- 691 National Historic Register Properties
- 73 National Register Historic Districts
- 5 National Scenic Byways
- 140 state parks and other public recreation areas

Examples of historic sites and points of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Lincoln Home National Historic Site (NPS; Springfield) – only home owned by Abraham Lincoln
- New Philadelphia National Historic Site (NPS; Barry) – first known town founded and legally registered by an African American before the Civil War
- Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site (State of Illinois; Lerna) – 19th-century home of Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Lincoln, father and stepmother of Abraham Lincoln
- Lincoln Heritage Museum (Lincoln College; Lincoln) – historical recreations and collection of historic objects owned by, used by, or related to Abraham Lincoln
- Historic Nauvoo (Historic District, Nauvoo) – home to more than thirty historic sites from 1839-1846
- Mount Pulaski Courthouse State Historic Site (State of Illinois; Mount Pulaski) – as an attorney, Abraham Lincoln regularly argued cases in the second floor courtroom
- Metamora Courthouse State Historic Site (State of Illinois; Metamora) – one of two surviving courthouses on the historic 8th Judicial Circuit traveled by Abraham Lincoln
- Old State Capital State Historic Site (State of Illinois; Springfield) – Illinois' statehouse from 1840 to 1876 and the location where Abraham Lincoln delivered his famous "House Divided" speech
- Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site (State of Illinois; Springfield) - memorial and tomb of Abraham Lincoln, Mary Todd Lincoln, and three of their four sons
- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (State of Illinois; Springfield) - official presidential library and museum of Abraham Lincoln, documenting his life and the Civil War
- McLean County Museum of History (McLean County Historical Society; Bloomington) - history museum focusing on the history of McLean County, which includes an exhibit on Abraham Lincoln's work in the county on the Illinois Eighth Judicial Court
- Looking for Lincoln Story Trail (LFL; various) - collection of wayside exhibits that tell the story of Lincoln's life and times throughout Illinois



Figure 1: Map of ALNHA and Eppley Institute data collection sites

2.1.1 History of the Region & Lincoln's Time in Illinois

Understanding the history of the “Land of Lincoln” is pivotal to understanding the area that is the ALNHA, and in turn, the work of LFL. Many of the sites and communities that make up key elements of Lincoln's footprint in Illinois now comprise the ALNHA.

Indigenous peoples are thought to have inhabited present-day Illinois approximately 12,000 years ago; the first Europeans arrived in the area in the 1600s (History.com Editors, 2023). Central Illinois was home to the Kickapoo while the areas along the Mississippi, Wabash, and Illinois rivers were home to a group of tribes referred to by European settlers as the Illinois and were united by a common language, Algonquian. Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Jolliet were the first French missionaries to arrive in Illinois and established a mission in Peoria in 1691. Soon after, several more French settlements were established (Illinois State Museum, n.d.). Illinois was attractive for its trading routes along the many rivers that run through it; however, the lack of minable resources resulted in the slow growth of the French population. Of those, approximately one-third were enslaved peoples (Esarey, 2004). At the end of the French and Indian War, Illinois was ceded to the British prompting many French settlers to flee the area, with even more following after the beginning of the Revolutionary War (History.com Editors, 2023).

The area was part of Virginia until 1783 when it was ceded to the Northwest Territories, but the population remained low until after the War of 1812. On December 3, 1818, Illinois was admitted as the 21st state. Due to conflicts and disease, the population of Indigenous peoples declined to less than 300 in 1832, at which time the Indian Removal Act was signed into federal law (State of Illinois, 2000). Concomitantly, Illinois experienced population growth from 55,000 in 1820 to 476,000 in 1840 and more than 1.7 million by the beginning of the Civil War in 1860 (VandeCreek, n.d.). One of the largest towns in this time was Nauvoo, which was established by members of the Church of Latter-Day Saints and had a population of nearly 12,000 until they fled to Missouri in 1846 (Illinois Secretary of State, 2021).

Although Illinois was admitted to the Union as a free state, individuals who were already living there at the time could continue to own enslaved people and indentured servitude was permitted. In fact, although the state officially banned slavery completely in 1848, the practice continued until 1863 (History.com Editors, 2023). There was a biracial community, New Philadelphia, in Pike County during the 1820s and the State Convention of Colored Cities of the State of Illinois was established in 1856 in Alton, but discrimination remained widespread (VandeCreek, n.d.). Later, in 1865, Illinois would become the first state to ratify the 13th amendment abolishing slavery in the United States (History.com Editors, 2023).

Before his arrival in Illinois in 1830, Abraham Lincoln grew up in poverty on the frontiers of Kentucky and Indiana, living in single room log cabins with his family. He taught himself to read, worked on the farm and rivers, and famously split rails for fences. At the age of twenty-one, he moved to Macon County, Illinois, with his family; in 1831, he departed for New Salem, Illinois (Sangamon County). His first political campaign, for Illinois General Assembly in 1832, resulted in defeat. However, he was elected to the state legislature in 1834 and held that position through 1841 (Monroe, n.d.). He received his law license in 1836 and moved to Springfield in 1837 (NPS, 2021). Illinois faced an economic depression in 1837, the same year in which the state legislature condemned the abolitionist movement, a resolution to which Lincoln was opposed. In 1839, Lincoln and Douglas had their first public debate during which Lincoln was anti-slavery but not supportive of the black suffrage movements (Monroe, n.d.).

On August 3, 1846, Lincoln was elected to the United States House of Representatives (Illinois Secretary of State, 2021). During his term, he opposed slavery in new territories and stood against the Mexican-American War stating, “the US Army marched into a peaceful Mexican settlement” (Monroe, n.d.). Returning to the practice of law, Lincoln helped establish

the Illinois Republican Party in Bloomington, Illinois, in 1854 in part as a response to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, written by Stephen Douglas.

Lincoln returned to the political arena in 1858 after being nominated as the Republican candidate for Senate and making his famous “House Divided” speech. Seven debates, known as the Lincoln-Douglas Debates, would be scheduled in 1858 between the two Senate candidates (Monroe, n.d.). The debates occurred on August 21 in Ottawa, August 27 in Freeport, September 15 in Jonesboro, September 18 in Charleston, October 7 in Galesburg, October 13 in Quincy, and October 15 in Alton (Illinois Secretary of State, 2021). Each debate included a one hour opening speech, a one-and-a-half-hour answer and a half hour rebuttal. The debates saw Douglas making an argument for popular sovereignty and accusing Lincoln of supporting black suffrage movements, putting Lincoln on the defensive and being forced to walk the line between being anti-slavery while denying that Black Americans had social and political equality. Douglas ultimately won the Senate seat (Monroe, n.d.).

Despite losing the seat, Lincoln’s performance and positions resulted in him being chosen as the presidential candidate by the Illinois Republican party in May 1860 and would win that election on Nov 6 with 39% of the popular vote, carrying no state south of the Mason-Dixon Line (Monroe, n.d.). In part due to the presidential election result, the Confederate States were established in February 1861 after which Lincoln departed Springfield on Feb 11, one day before his 52nd birthday (Illinois Secretary of State, 2021). He departed with a Farewell Address, stating “Here I have lived from my youth until now I am an old man. Here the most sacred ties of earth were assumed; here all my children were born; and here one of them lies buried. To you, dear friends, I owe all that I have, all that I am.” (Monroe, n.d.). His body would be returned to Springfield to lay in state after his assassination in April of 1865; he is buried at Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois.

2.1.2 Current Characteristics of the Region

The ALNHA and general “footprint” of Abraham Lincoln in Illinois is centered in Springfield, Illinois. Looking for Lincoln’s office and many other Lincoln-related institutions are in Springfield, which is the state capital and county seat (Sangamon County). Overall, the State of Illinois, Springfield, Illinois, and Sangamon County (where Springfield is located), have grown in population from 2000-2020 (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.; Illinois Department of Public Health, 2023) (Table 3).

Of course, the ALNHA expands beyond the Springfield area to a 43-county area (and an additional two cities). Of those forty-three counties, thirty-five have experienced a population decline (81%; Figure 2) and the average population decline was -9.1%. The counties experiencing population increases included Champaign, Madison, McLean, Moultrie, Piatt, Tazewell, and Woodford (in addition to Sangamon). The cities of Freeport and Jonesboro have also experienced population declines (-9.3%, -7.7%, respectively).

Bloomington (in McLean County and within the ALNHA) has the weakest economy in the State of Illinois (Moody’s Analytics, 2022), owing in part to the fact that two main economic drivers in the city, financial services and state government, have been struggling with respect to job creation in recent years, as well as the fact that Illinois State University, another major employer, has experienced declines in enrollment. Like much of the country, Illinois is still recovering from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, with not all areas of the state recovering at equal rates (Moody’s Analytics). On a positive note, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Development, in its 2022 economic milestones report, touts \$106 million in Rebuild Illinois funding, a community revitalization funding program, and eighteen consecutive months of job growth. Although these gains are not equally distributed among all parts of the state, these are positive indicators.

Table 3: Population Metric Snapshot

Population	2000	2012	2020	% Change (2000-2020)
State of Illinois	12,419,293	12,830,632	12,812,508	3.2%
Sangamon County	188,951	197,465	196,343	3.9%
Springfield, IL	111,454	116,250	114,394	2.6%

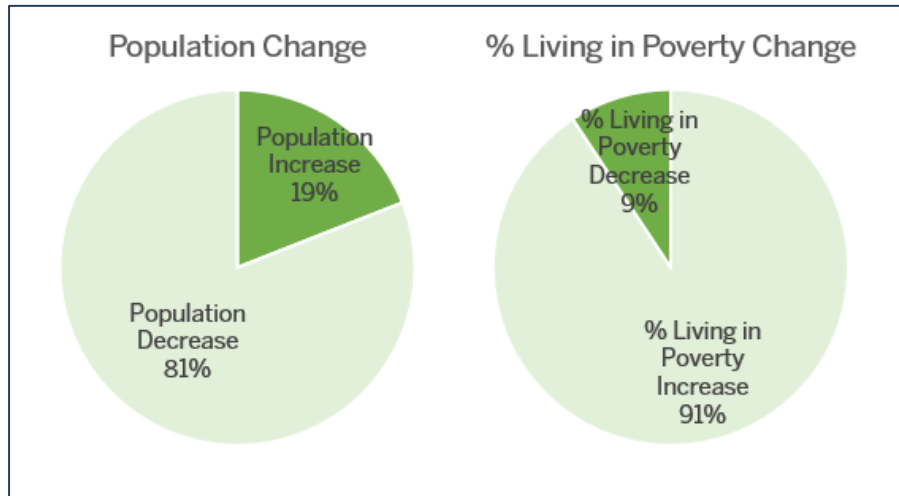


Figure 2: Summary of ALNHA Counties by Key Population Metrics, (% of Counties, 2000-2020, n = 43)

It is important to contextualize population-based data with other community metrics, such as economic indicators. The forty-three counties that make up the ALNHA generate \$831 million in labor income, which results in \$204 million in state tax revenue and \$199 million in local tax revenue. Visitor spending in these forty-three counties equaled \$4.3 million in 2019, which grew at a 3.5% annual rate over the prior year (Tourism Economics, 2022). This visitor spending comprised 10% of all visitor spending in Illinois in that year. Of the \$4.3 million total, \$792,000 reflected spending on lodging and another \$396,000 represented recreation-based services. The United States Department of Labor Statistics' data for Springfield, Illinois showed positive employment growth in most sectors of the economy, and of eleven fields reporting, leisure and hospitality performed second-best (5.7%, June 2023). Across the state, leisure and hospitality was the top-growing industry in May 2023, based on 12-month % change rate of 6.4% (United States Department of Labor Statistics). Additionally, the State of Illinois had set aside \$25 million of its Restore Illinois funding for a Tourism Attraction and Festivals Grant to further encourage growth in local tourism. The first round of awards, in July 2022, awarded grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$562,500 (Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, October 2022).

The ALNHA encompasses a large geographic area, which is important context with respect to the opportunities—and challenges—LFL faces in supporting and impacting a region of this size. Over the course of the evaluation, the Eppley Institute evaluation team visited six LFL communities (see Section 2.1).

2.1.3 The “Lincoln Landscape”

The ALNHA is unique in that the geographic, touristic, and historic landscape of the region has several Lincoln-related institutions. These institutions represent nonprofit, federal, state, and local institutions, and were often described as “players” in the “Lincoln landscape.” During community input conversations, many individuals shared that they had visited or planned to visit more than one Lincoln-related site. For illustrative purposes, descriptions of several institutions follow.

The Lincoln Presidential Foundation, formerly the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Foundation, was established in 2000 and is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Similar in mission to the ALNHA, the Lincoln Presidential Foundation is “dedicated to sharing the story of Abraham Lincoln’s life, legacy, and leadership” (Lincoln Presidential Foundation, 2023). This organization has a national and international focus, aiming to extend Lincoln’s legacy and the values of freedom and democracy. In contrast, LFL is committed to local and regional community development, tourism experiences, and quality of life within the ALNHA.

The Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum is in Springfield, Illinois, and is run by the State of Illinois. The site hosts exhibits and performances about Lincoln and his life. Its mission is “to inspire civic engagement through the diverse lens of Illinois history and sharing with the world the life and legacy of Abraham Lincoln” (State of Illinois, 2023). Unlike many LFL run and sponsored events, entrance to the museum requires paid admission (\$15 for adults, \$6-12 for children and students).

The Lincoln Home National Historic Site is in Springfield, Illinois. It is an NPS unit and consists of a discreet four city-block location; included within its boundaries is the Lincoln home and several neighbors’ homes from the era (National Park Service, 2023b). Because of its designation as a National Park Service unit, the Lincoln Home historic site shared that it is more challenging to expend funding outside its geographic boundaries, a limitation that LFL often compensates for through their partnerships and program work. According to National Park Service visitor use statistics, approximately 145,000 individuals visited the site in 2022. Among these Lincoln-related institutions, Lincoln Home is one of LFL’s most engaged partners, and LFL’s office is located on site.

The New Philadelphia National Historic Site is located near Barry, Illinois, on the site of the former town of New Philadelphia. It is among the newest NPS units. It was established as a national historic site in December 2022, although it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2009 (National Park Service, 2023c). The site is significant as the first known town planned and legally registered by an African American before the Civil War. While the historic site does not focus specifically on Abraham Lincoln, there are several areas of overlap due to its physical location within the ALNHA and its similar themes of slavery and Civil War-era history.

The Abraham Lincoln Tomb is located with the Oak Ridge Cemetery in Springfield, Illinois; while the cemetery is managed by the city, the tomb is managed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. It consists of a granite tomb and monument and bronze bust sculpture of Lincoln. Inside the monument is the final resting place of Abraham Lincoln, his wife, Mary Todd Lincoln, and three of their four sons. The tomb also serves as a monument and tourist site. Events on-site include programs such as flag lowering ceremonies; unlike the ALNHA, the tomb is not focused on outreach or community-building (Visit Springfield Illinois, n.d.).

Lincoln’s New Salem State Historic Site is located near Petersburg, Illinois, within the bounds of the ALNHA. It is a reconstruction of the village of New Salem, where Lincoln spent part of his early adulthood. The site is an Illinois Department of Natural Resources historic site and has opportunities for outdoor recreation including camping, a shelter house, and hiking trails.

Admission is free, though there is a suggested donation, and all tours are self-guided. It hosts eight main events per year and reports an annual attendance of 450,000 visitors (Lincoln's New Salem, n.d.). Like many Lincoln-related sites, its activities are generally location-based, with interpretive and event programming on-site.

The Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic site, is located in Lerna, Illinois, within the bounds of the ALNHA, is also owned and operated by the State of Illinois and preserves 86 acres, including the 19th century log cabin home of Abraham Lincoln's father and stepmother, Thomas Lincoln and Sarah Bush Lincoln (Lincoln Log State Historic Site, 2023). It hosts several events and historic reenactments each year.

The Lincoln Heritage Museum is located in Lincoln, Illinois, and requires paid admission of \$5-10. Tours are available on Monday by appointment. It does not appear to offer events at this time, as the events listed on the Lincoln Heritage Museum website last took place in 2021 (Lincoln Heritage Museum, 2023). Although the museum continues to operate and has opening hours Tuesday through Saturday, events and funding were almost certainly impacted by the closing of Lincoln College in 2022, which had previously run the museum (Chappell, 2022).

2.2 Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition

The local coordinating entity for the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area is the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition ("Looking for Lincoln," "LFL"), a non-profit 501(c)(3) founded in 2002. From this time until its federal designation in 2008 and subsequent management plan development—and then hiring of full-time staff—LFL was characterized as a grassroots organization that professionalized over time.

LFL was designated as the local coordinating entity by Congress in the heritage area's founding legislation in 2008. LFL became responsible for creating a management plan for the ALNHA, developing and maintaining partnerships, and implementing projects and programs that align with the goals of the NHA.

2.2.1 Mission and Vision

The vision of the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition is quite simply, "To be the voice for the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area."

Its mission statement reads (Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, 2023):

The Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to working collaboratively with local, state, and national partners across the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area to tell the quality stories of Abraham Lincoln's life and times and to provide high quality experiences for visitors, economic opportunities for communities and to improve the quality of life for residents.

By:

- developing and overseeing projects/programs;
- local coordinating participation and work of partners;
- applying Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area guidelines, criteria, and standards to the work of the communities and partners.

2.2.2 Organizational Structure & Governance

Overview

The ALNHA is supported by several partners and individuals that have advisory, programmatic, managerial, and oversight roles. A relevant and key distinction is to make here is that of Looking for Lincoln (LFL) versus the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. In

discussions with LFL staff, partners, and leadership, “Looking for Lincoln” was most frequently used, particularly as it relates to programming, brand identity, and organizational management. In contrast, “ALNHA” or “the Heritage Area” generally referred to the geographic region encompassing the heritage area.

This is largely due to the timeline of the organization. LFL began to develop an identity and community of partners in central Illinois before its designation as the local coordinating entity for the ALNHA. LFL was organized in 1998 and became a nonprofit 501(c)(3) in 2002 (see Section 2.3 - Timeline). It was several years later that the ALNHA was designated (2008) and more than a decade after its nonprofit status was attained that the management plan was completed (2013). The ALNHA Management Plan (2013) frequently emphasized the LFL brand identity.

An overview of the organizational structure is provided in Figure 3; The organization is very collaborative; while the gradient colors in Figure 3 seek to demonstrate reporting relationships, the leadership of LFL values partnerships, input, and consensus. For example, whereas the Program Manager and Business Manager report to the Executive Director, the team generally operates as a collaborative group of three. Similarly, while each community’s working group is asked to designate an individual to serve on the LFL Steering Council, there is not a formal hierarchical relationship between those groups.



Figure 3: Looking for Lincoln Organizational Chart

An example of how some of these entities interact to achieve the organization’s goals is illustrated by:

1. The Board of Directors sets strategy direction and approves an annual budget.
2. The Executive Director and Steering Council carry out the work (with the support of LFL staff). The Executive Director manages finances and staff resources.
3. The Executive Director and Steering Council Chair report to the Board of Directors regarding progress on a quarterly basis.
4. The Steering Council and staff engage in annual planning regarding resource needs.
5. The Executive Director incorporates recommendations into the annual workplan and proposes a budget for the Board of Director’s consideration.
6. The process reinitiates at the beginning of each year.

Oversight, Administration, and Management Roles

The National Park Service administers the NHA Program and NHA System. NHAs are not park units. Like other heritage areas, NPS partners with the local coordinating entity (in the ALNHA’s case, Looking for Lincoln), provides federal funding, technical assistance, and is responsible for tracking ALNHA matching federal funds.

As a nonprofit 501(c)(3), Looking for Lincoln is governed by a nonprofit Board of Directors. Currently, there are six Board members and two ex-officio members, the LFL Director and the superintendent of the Lincoln Home National Historic site (Table 4). The LFL bylaws outline that the Board shall consist of nine members. As a result, there are currently three vacancies. The LFL Executive Director aides the Board in identifying and recruiting prospective members, who would then seek election to the Board; this is a continuous process and conversations regarding Board membership are ongoing (e.g., in the case of a mid-year vacancy).

Competencies and characteristics that are sought after among Board members include: Legal and accounting expertise, business acumen, knowledge of history, diversity in personal characteristics (e.g., geography, demographics). Board members characterize their role as providing oversight of staff (particularly the Executive Director, a norm of nonprofit organizations), serving as fiscal stewards, and generally supporting the direction of the organization. Board members serve three-year terms that are eligible for one renewal.

Table 4: Looking for Lincoln Board of Directors, Summer 2023

Name	Organization	Title	Board Position	Term Start	Term End	Term Renewals
Colin Hitt	Saint Louis University, PRIME Center	Executive Director	Board Chair	June 2019	June 2025	June 2022
Amanda Rizzo	Sikich, Inc.	Senior Accountant	Board Treasurer	June 2022	June 2028	June 2025
Justin Blandford	IL DNR, Historic Preservation Division, State Historic Sites	Site Superintendent	Board Director (Steering Council Chair)	June 2018	June 2024	June 2021
Lindsey Douglas	Union Pacific	Senior Director of Public Affairs	Board Director	June 2023	June 2029	June 2026
Paris Ervin	IL Health and Hospital Association, Media & Public Affairs	Senior Director	Board Director	June 2019	June 2025	June 2022
Hal Oakley		Attorney	Board Director	June 2022	June 2028	June 2025
Tim Good	Lincoln Home National Historic Site	Site Superintendent	Board Ex-Officio	-	-	-
Sarah Watson	Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition	Executive Director	Board Ex-Officio	-	-	-

Note. The LFL bylaws outline that Board of Directors shall consist of nine members, excluding ex-officio members. As of summer 2023, there are currently three vacancies.

LFL has maintained a staff of three full-time individuals, supplemented by contracted individuals, for more than a decade. The full-time staff roles include Executive Director, Program Manager, and Business Manager. Each current, full-time staff member has been with the organization since at least 2013, the year the Management Plan was finalized. Each role’s history can be summarized as:

- **Executive Director:** Sarah Watson, 2012 – Current (previously Nikki Stratton, early years through 2009; Hal Smith 2009-2010; Kay Smith 2010-2012).
- **Program Manager:** Heather Feezor, 2013 – Current (previously Robert Crosby 2009-2013)
- **Business Manager:** Jeanette Carlson, 2012 – Current (previously Sheila Blodgett early years through 2011)

Advisory, Collaboration, and Partnership Roles

Looking for Lincoln also has a Steering Council; its primary focus is guiding and supporting the organization programmatically. It is comprised of individuals representing LFL communities, state and federal agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Each Looking for Lincoln community is asked to appoint one individual from their community's local working group to serve on the LFL Steering Council. Individuals are appointed for at least one year but terms are not limited. To aid alignment between the Steering Council's work and the Board's oversight, the Chair is also appointed to the organization's Board of Directors. The LFL Executive Director can also appoint Steering Council members as determined. Given this mix of organizations represented, the Steering Council often has members that represent cities, towns, historic sites, commissions, museums, and visitor bureaus across the ALNHA. In many cases, Steering Council members serve as the "Lincoln point person" in their local community. The current roster of Steering Council members include:

- Justin Blandford, Springfield State Historic Sites
- Daniel Briseno, LFL Working Group Edgar County
- Pat Cain, Museum of the Grand Prairie
- Holly Cain, Quincy Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Jeanie Cooke, Danville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Marynel Corton, New Philadelphia Association
- Joe Crain, Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum
- Paula Cross, Decatur LFL Working Group
- Scott Dahl, Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Freddie Fry, Lake Shelbyville Area CVB
- Doug Gift, LaSalle County Working Group
- Tim Good, Lincoln Home National Historic Site
- Nancy Gorney, Menard County Working Group
- Amy Graham, Carthage Chamber of Commerce
- Nicole Haas, Greater Freeport Partnership
- Jock Hedblade, Visit Unforgettable Forgottonia, Macomb Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Lori Henderson, Coles County Tourism
- Brittany Henry, Jacksonville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Linda Hileman, Anna-Jonesboro LFL Working Group
- Crystal Howard, Bloomington-Normal Area Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Cory Jobe, Alton Convention & Visitors Bureau
- Ron Keller, Lincoln Heritage Museum
- Rob Mellon, Quincy/Adams County LFL Working Group
- Matthew Mittelstaedt, Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site
- Anne Moseley, Sangamon Valley Collection
- Janice Petersen, DeWitt County LFL Working Group
- Sue Richter, Vermilion County Museum
- Alice Roate, Logan County Tourism
- Dale Timmerman, Vandalia Lincoln Heritage Commission

- Liz Vincent, Pontiac Tourism
- Paula Woods, Beardstown LFL Working Group
- Jeff Woodard, McLean County Museum of History
- Kathy Zimmerman, Abe Lincoln Project of Pike County
- Vacant, Landmarks Illinois
- Vacant, Mount Pulaski Courthouse Foundation
- Vacant, Atlanta Historic Commission

Looking for Lincoln also organizes committees to focus on areas of strategic and/or programmatic importance. Generally, these committees are ad-hoc to keep committee responsibilities manageable for their members and to be responsive to priorities that change with time. An ad-hoc committee may meet a few times or extend over a longer period. Examples of recent ad hoc committees include the Underground Railroad Committee, LFL Community Stories, LFL Stories, ALNHA Interpretive Plan Review Committee, LFL Signature Events Committee. Past ad-hoc committees have included the Interpretation Committee, LEAD: Spirit of Lincoln Youth Academy, LFL Gateway Committee, LFL Designation Committee, and LFL Community Designations Committee.

2.2.3 Communities

Looking for Lincoln Communities are an important part of the ALNHA network and are mechanisms for local communities within the ALNHA to actively contribute to and be involved in the ALNHA goals and activities. Communities must go through a formal designation process, ensuring that they both (a) has a substantiated and significant Lincoln story as well as (b) a story that can be accessed by the visiting public. Additional detail regarding the Community Designation process is described in Section 3.2.3: Community Building. There are 29 LFL Communities. They include:

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Alton | 16. LaSalle County (LaSalle, Ottawa, Utica) |
| 2. Atlanta | 17. Lincoln |
| 3. Beardstown | 18. McDonough County (Macomb) |
| 4. Bloomington-Normal | 19. Metamora |
| 5. Carthage | 20. Mt. Pulaski |
| 6. Champaign County (Champaign-Urbana) | 21. Petersburg |
| 7. Coles County (Charleston) | 22. Pleasant Plains |
| 8. Danville | 23. Pike County (Pittsfield) |
| 9. Decatur | 24. Pontiac |
| 10. DeWitt County (Clinton) | 25. Quincy |
| 11. Edgar County (Paris) | 26. Shelby County (Shelbyville) |
| 12. Freeport | 27. Springfield |
| 13. Galesburg | 28. Taylorville |
| 14. Jacksonville | 29. Vandalia |
| 15. Jonesboro | |

2.2.4 Partners

Looking for Lincoln’s work is also augmented by the vital role of partner organizations. In FY2022, LFL reported thirty-five formal and seventy-seven informal partners that support the work of the ALNHA. The distinction between these two groups is that formal partners are organizations that LFL directly collaborates with and who are substantively involved in projects or programs. Informal partners are those with whom LFL cooperates or coordinates with but are not substantively involved in the organization’s projects or programs. Examples

of partners of each type are provided in Table 5; the full list of partners is provided in Appendix C.

Table 5: Examples of LFL Partnerships

Formal Partners	Informal Partners
Abraham Lincoln Association	4H University of Illinois Extension
Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum	Abraham Lincoln Tourism Bureau of Logan County
Abe Lincoln Project of Pike County	Bloomington-Normal Area Convention & Visitor Bureau
Decatur & Macon County LFL Coalition	Canal Corridor Association/Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Area
Freeport Looking for Lincoln Group	Center for Lincoln Studies at the University of Illinois Springfield
Gin Ridge Music	Champaign Public Library
Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Office	Charlestown City Hall
Greater Freeport Partnership	Dana Thomas House State Historic Site
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	First Presbyterian Church, Springfield
Macomb Convention & Visitors Bureau	Illinois Department of Agriculture
Mt. Pulaski Looking for Lincoln Working Group (Mt. Pulaski Courthouse Foundation)	Illinois Route 66 Byway
Southern Illinois University Press	Historic Nauvoo
Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau	Lincoln-Douglas Debate Museum
Union Pacific Railroad	New Philadelphia Association
Vandalia Lincoln Heritage Committee	William Watson Hotel

2.3 Timeline

Over the past 15 years, LFL has grown and adapted as an organization. Figure 4 illustrates its growth (e.g., by institutional designation, funding) as well as adaptations (e.g., types of programs, program modality) to meet their operating and social contexts, such as the transition to virtual programs because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

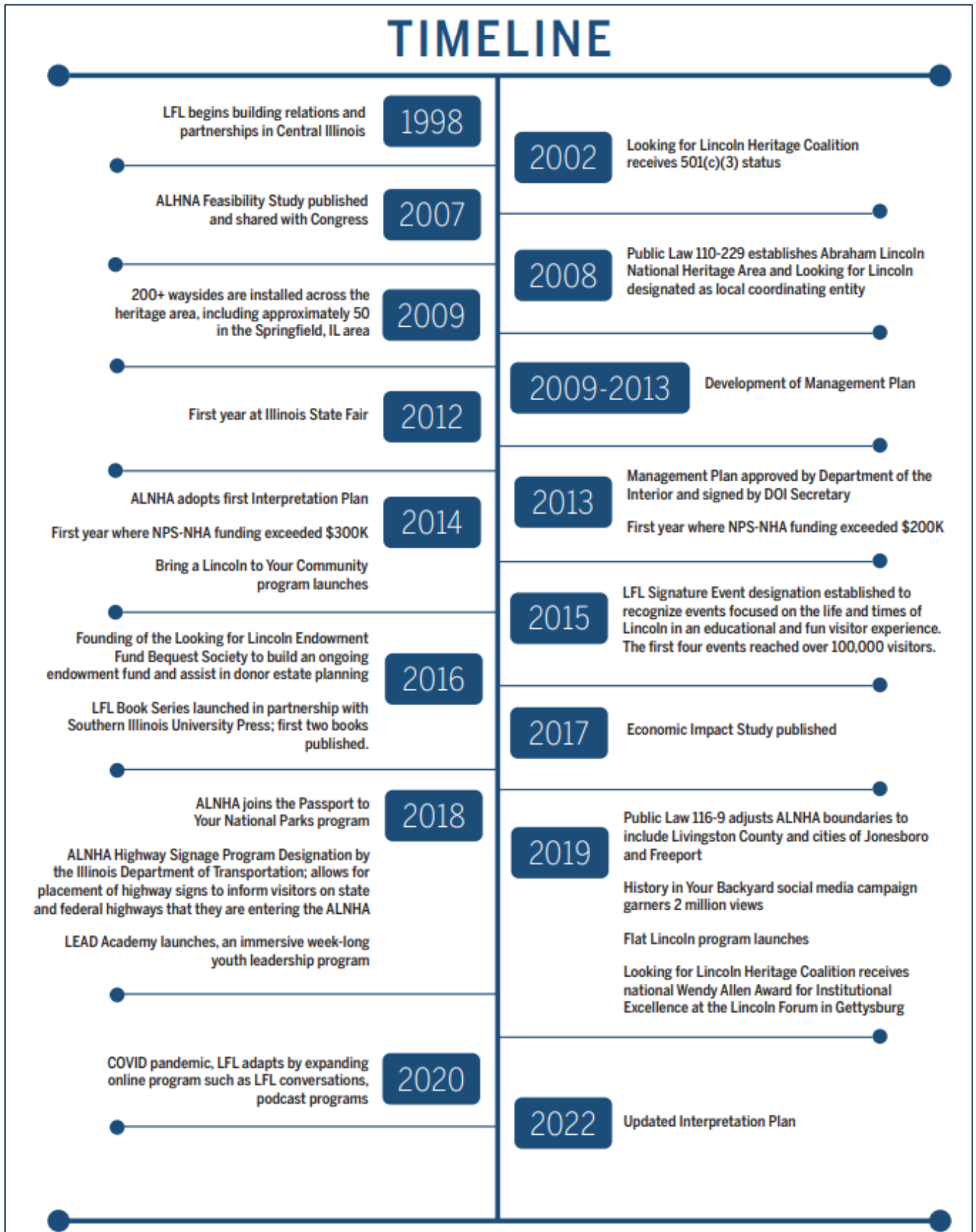


Figure 4: LFL Timeline

SECTION 3: ABRAHAM LINCOLN NHA FULFILLMENT OF THE AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN



Looking for Lincoln wayside exhibit in Danville, Illinois.
Photo by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.

3.1 Goals and Objectives

This evaluation's first research question asks: "Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the heritage area achieved its proposed accomplishments?"

When Congress authorized the enactment of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area in 2008, it outlined the following purposes:

1. to recognize the significant natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the study entitled "Feasibility Study of the Proposed Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area" prepared for the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition in 2002 and revised in 2007;
2. to promote heritage, cultural and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public;
3. to recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key periods in the growth of America, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage;
4. to recognize and interpret the distinctive role the region played in shaping the man who would become the 16th President of the United States, and how Abraham Lincoln's life left its traces in the stories, folklore, buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes of the region;
5. to provide a cooperative management framework to foster a close working relationship with all levels of government, the private sector, and the local communities in the region in identifying, preserving, interpreting, and developing the historical, cultural, scenic, and natural resources of the region for the educational and inspirational benefit of current and future generations; and
6. to provide appropriate linkages between units of the National Park System and communities, governments, and organizations within the Heritage Area.

In order to achieve these designated purposes, Looking for Lincoln outlined eight goals in its Management Plan (2013):

1. Maximize the heritage area's effectiveness through strong partnerships that link communities, sites, organizations, ideas, and actions.
2. Create engaging experiences that connect places and stories throughout the heritage area and promote public awareness of the region's history, culture, and significance.
3. Promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and related heritage development that support increased economic activity and investment in heritage resources.
4. Participate in a national dialogue on keeping America's promise by examining national issues associated with the Antebellum period and in particular Abraham Lincoln's life and evolving thought.
5. Raise public consciousness about the needs and benefits of preserving the historic and cultural legacies of central Illinois.
6. Facilitate initiatives for the preservation and stewardship of the region's physical legacy of historic resources, communities, and landscapes.
7. Strengthen the ability of sites and resources associated with Abraham Lincoln and his legacy to achieve long-term sustainability.
8. Encourage and facilitate the enhancement of community character and quality of life related to the region's heritage for the benefit of residents and to strengthen the visitor experience.

The LFL Management Plan is one of several documents that has guided LFL over its history (Table 6). With guidance from these documents and feedback from LFL, the evaluation team developed a logic model that would guide the present evaluation (Figure 5). Through this

logic model, overarching goals of all NHAs—and the ALNHA specifically—are linked to resources, inputs, organizations, entities, which are then connected to activities and strategies led by LFL. Conceptually, enactment of these activities and strategies result in short-term and long-term attainment of outcomes.

Table 6: Institutional Planning Documents

Year	Document	Purpose
2002, 2007	Feasibility Study of the Proposed ALNHA	To determine the feasibility of establishing the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area
2012	Management Plan	To establish a plan, guidance to management, and to fulfill the requirements of ALNHA's designating legislation
2014	Interpretation Plan	To assist and guide LFL communities in designing effective interpretation of their national, cultural, and historical resources
2017	Economic Impact Study	To document and quantify the economic and social benefits of the heritage area, especially its positive impact on tourism and spending in the area
2022	Interpretation Plan	To update the 2014 interpretive plan, including the strategies for interpretive education and marketing
Annual	Workplan	To establish goals and an action plan for the year

ALNHA EVALUATION LOGIC MODEL

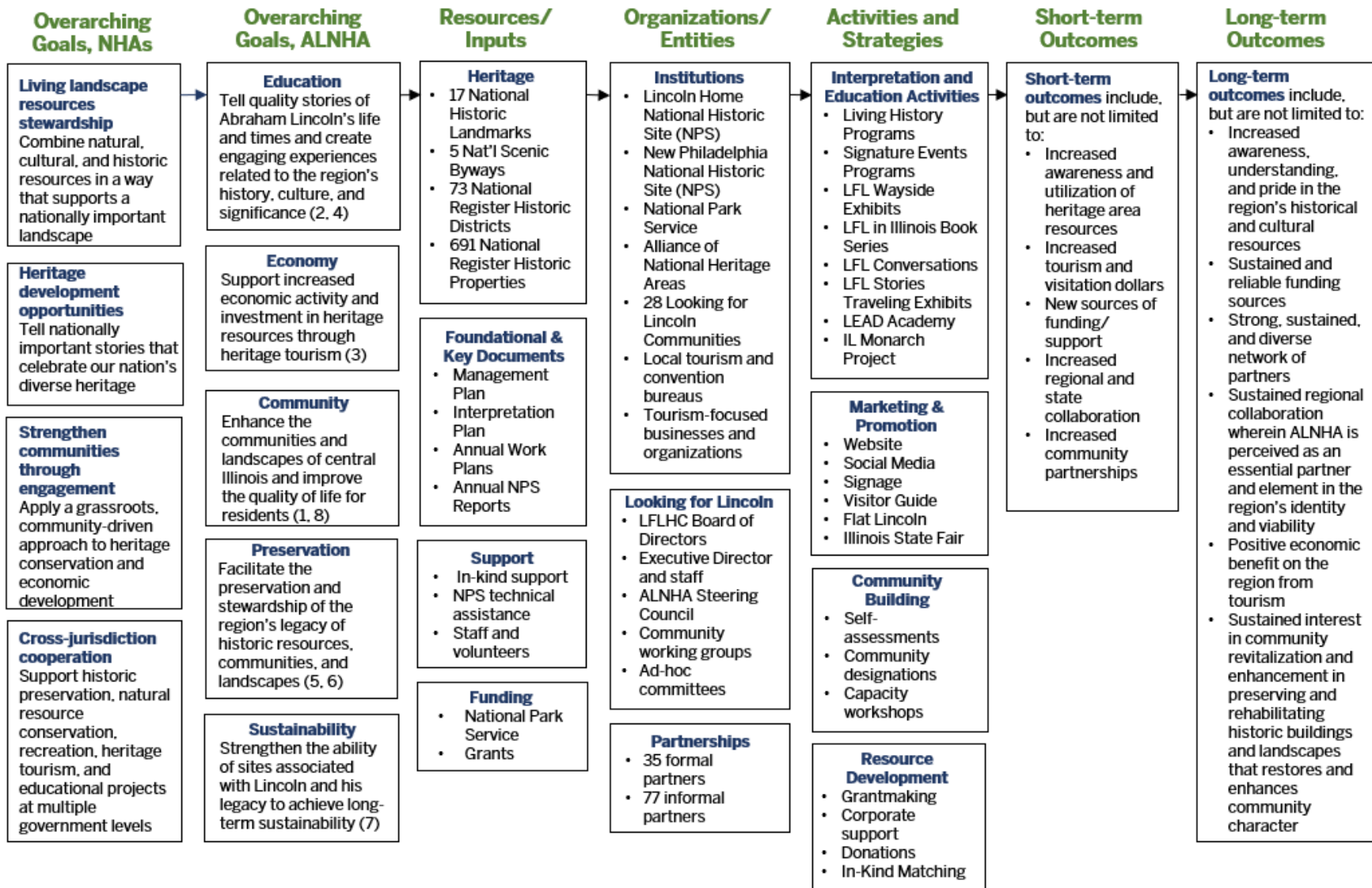


Figure 5: ALNHA Evaluation Logic Model

3.2 Activities and Impacts

This logic model identified four areas of activity groups and underlying programs. These four areas include: Interpretation and Education Activities, Community Building, Marketing & Promotion, and Sustainability. While the logic model structured the overall evaluation, the data domain matrix was used as an initial tool to guide the evaluation and develop initial interview guides (Appendix D).

3.2.1 Interpretation and Education Activities

Looking for Lincoln has engaged in many pursuits in the activity area of Interpretation and Education (See Section 3.1 Goals and Objectives – Logic Model); activities in this area relate to several of its stated management plan goals, but particularly Goals #2 & #4. These interpretation and education activities include:

- Living History programs
- Signature Event programs
- Looking for Lincoln wayside exhibits
- Looking for Lincoln in Illinois Book Series
- Looking for Lincoln Conversations
- Looking for Lincoln Stories
- Traveling Exhibits
- LEAD Academy
- Illinois Monarch Project

Of note, several of the activities listed above emphasize or are branded as “LFL” activities due to institutional history and brand identity (see Section 2.2.2 Organizational Structure & Governance). The 200+ waysides across central Illinois are one such example; this project initiated around the turn of the millennium and was finished with installation within a year of the ALNHA’s designation (2009). In interviews, LFL’s programming in this activity area was highlighted repeatedly. Through these program activities, LFL makes the life and times of Abraham Lincoln accessible to the public and its audience, telling a “classic American story” of Abraham Lincoln. Table 7 illustrates a snapshot of community engagement outcomes associated with LFL Interpretation and Education activities; a detailed description of each activity identified in the Logic Model and evidence to support its impact follows.

Table 7: Participation in LFL Events and Programs

Year (FY)	Educational Program Participants	Event Participants	Volunteers Engaged
2008	n/a	n/a	n/a
2009	4,700	not reported	not reported
2010	193,242	not reported	not reported
2011	5,200	not reported	not reported
2012	138,228	not reported	not reported
2013	not reported	2,250	3,353
2014	122,410	100,000	691
2015	114,427	100,000	895
2016	107,756	100,245	1,060
2017	286,298	150,255	1,233
2018	390,095	140,000	974
2019	185,717	140,000	1,111
2020	4,321	0	404
2021	9,020	202,000	871
2022	3,782	209,200	597
Total	1,565,196	1,143,950	10,592

Note: All estimates of attendees and volunteers are sourced from LFL NPS Annual Reports, Part II, Section 8 “Community Engagement”. Anomalous year in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic (impacting programs such as Living History programming at the Illinois State Fair as well as Signature Events).

Living History Programs

The Living History program began in federal fiscal year (FY) 2014; this is a program that features period actors—often Abraham Lincoln interpreters—that interact with the public. As a result, it has a dual mission of both educating the public regarding the life and times of Abraham Lincoln while also interpreting from the perspective of Abraham Lincoln, specifically. It is reportedly one of the most popular programs among LFL community partners.

When Living History programs feature Abraham Lincoln (the “Bring a Lincoln” program), “Abe” often adopts a “roving” interpretive approach. LFL has supported an “Abe” presence at Lincoln-specific events (e.g., celebration of Lincoln’s birthday), events celebrating Lincoln’s life and times (e.g., the Lincoln Days Civil War reenactment), and other community events, such as a Halloween Trick or Treat. The Bring a Lincoln component of Living History programs is also a funding opportunity for LFL communities: They can receive up to \$750 in cost reimbursement from LFL to support the presence of “Abe” at these events.

Since 2014 when the Bring a Lincoln to Your Community program was initiated, LFL has funded interpreters at fifty-eight community events at a total cost of \$27,875. These events were attended by over 350,000 visitors in total and the investment helped partner communities leverage approximately \$1.3 million in funds since 2016. LFL support of Living History programs can make a “big” difference via “small” investments. Without LFL support, many communities would not be able to afford a Lincoln interpreter. Additionally, this program provides an opportunity for others to serve the LFL mission. For example, community musicians have contributed music in-kind.

Historically, LFL also organized a large Living History Program at the Illinois State Fair, featuring a blacksmith, broom maker, civil war re-enactors, and others representing Abraham Lincoln’s life and times. However, COVID-19 was an inflection point. LFL was unable to organize the event as it previously did due to social distancing constraints. LFL did continue to pay for Lincoln reenactors at virtual events hosted by communities, indicating the adaptability of LFL staff to continue the organizational mission and programs during that time. In the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization re-evaluated its Illinois State Fair programming, considering factors such as staff time and effort. As a result, in 2021 and 2022, LFL had a reduced presence at the fair (without the Living History component). The year 2023 will be the first time LFL returns its Living History elements to the state fair. One key factor contributing to this decision was a perception among LFL staff that the audience at the state fair is diverse, and that they can reach members of the public they might not otherwise reach through their other activities and programs.

Signature Events Programs

LFL’s Signature Events program is a program that supports LFL communities in their production of an event related to the life or times of Abraham Lincoln. It is a program that seeks to build financial and operational sustainability. From 2015-2019 the process included an application, selection by a committee, and observation by committee members at the event. A key requirement during this time stipulated that the applicant had to have an “established” event, i.e., LFL would not sponsor an event in its first year. LFL would sponsor an event for two years with seed funding (up to \$2,000). While this may appear as a moderate level of support, many communities are small, dependent on volunteer effort, and/or have limited budgets. Interviews with community representatives indicated that this was a substantial amount of support. One interviewee indicated that their community was considering initiating a new event, with the hope it would be supported via the LFL Signature Event program in its first year.

After two years of funding, organizers were expected to have built an established event that can be supported locally via sponsorship or other revenue sources. Examples of Signature Events include Lincoln Days (civil war reenactment & period educational programming in Pittsfield) and History Comes Alive (an event that features “Abe” and Mary interpreters, among other program components, in Springfield).

The program began in 2015 and continued through 2019 (Table 8). While data might indicate that attendance peaked in 2017 and 2018, this is likely due to attendance at History Comes Alive in Springfield, which makes up a sizable portion of attendance counts and can be variable due to the difficulty in counting attendance at a two-month-long, city-wide program.

Table 8: Attendance at LFL Signature Events and In-Kind Support Received

Year (FY)	LFL Events	Attendance	Volunteers	LFL Investment	In-Kind Received
2015	4	108,010	332	\$12,262	\$139,784
2016	4	106,136	535	\$7,250	\$258,652
2017	3	279,468	494	\$5,500	\$326,356
2018	4	279,568	496	\$8,250	\$366,729
2019	4	122,777	468	\$8,250	\$412,059
Total	19	895,959	2,325	\$41,512	\$1,503,580

Note: Values provided by Looking for Lincoln staff.

In 2020, the Signature Events program was paused due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. It was re-initiated in calendar year (CY) 2023. This re-initiation also allowed for reflection—LFL staff communicated that they had observed that new Signature Events did not appear to be “coming online” due to the requirement that events fund their first year of operations, and few of the older events were becoming more financially sustainable. As a result, the application and evaluation processes were adjusted to (1) no longer require the organization to fund the first year, (2) include a virtual interview with the applicant group and a LFL Signature Event ad hoc committee, and (3) exclude the on-site evaluation of the event from the previous application process. CY2023 will feature two new events in areas that had previously not had a signature event: the Constitution Celebration (Jonesboro) and Harvest Frolic (Charleston).

The evaluation team had the opportunity to attend one recent Signature Event in June 2023—the Lincoln Days Civil War Reenactment in Pittsfield, Illinois (Figure 6). The event was well run and featured a series of educational and historical elements beyond the battle reenactment itself. LFL also had a staff and booth presence. Attendees of the event shared that they thought the event was well organized, the variety of programming was informative, and both organizers and participants were welcoming. Many attendees also shared that they were excited to bring their families to an event that depicts “living history;” this was particularly important for groups that included children.



Figure 6: Images from the June 2023 Lincoln Days Civil War Reenactments. At left, a Lincoln-interpreter (sponsored by LFL) recites the Gettysburg Address while Civil War reenactors ride by on horseback. At right, a musician and folklorist, Chris Vallillo, performs music from the mid-1800s. Photos by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.

Looking for Lincoln Wayside Exhibits

Going back to 2006, LFL’s waysides represent one of its earliest and largest program efforts in its history. By 2009, more than two hundred waysides have been drafted, designed, and installed in fifty-five communities across the ALNHA. To have one installed, local cities or counties were asked to fund half the cost, which is considerable (several thousand dollars), and LFL used federal funding to support the remainder. All have consistent design and branding with the LFL logo placed prominently. Throughout the evaluation team’s travels, waysides were observed in many LFL communities (Figure 7). To that end, waysides are one of the key visual “footprints” of Abraham Lincoln and LFL throughout the ALNHA, including areas that are not formally designated LFL communities. Additionally, in several communities, waysides are not “standalone” units; instead, multiple waysides in a single

community encourage recreation by providing an opportunity for visitors to walk between waysides.

Staff have described the wayside program as one of the biggest programmatic efforts as well as “one of the greatest impacts for most communities”; this was supported by comments in other interviews indicating that the waysides have been one of LFL’s greatest successes since its inception. One individual shared that the wayside signage is a key part of LFL’s public facing, “brick and mortar” work that has now become ubiquitous, particularly in the Springfield area.

Partners and community representatives have also expressed interest in adding new waysides and maintaining existing ones. This latter point is noteworthy, as most of the original waysides are outside their 10-year warranty period and predate the current LFL staff. LFL has not planned to support costs to repair or replace them; as a result, counties/municipalities are expected to fund these expenses in the future. LFL has, however, supported the development of new waysides, particularly those that tell new, compelling stories, such as those about prominent Black individuals during Lincoln’s time or those that describe “secondary stories” about that time in history. Additionally, if LFL were to support updates to or development of new waysides, adding heritage area branding may help increase awareness of the ALNHA as well (re: Section 2.2.2),



Figure 7: Waysides observed by evaluation team. Waysides counterclockwise from left include those located in Decatur, Bloomington, Danville, Springfield, and Charlestown. Photos by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.

Looking for Lincoln in Illinois Book Series

The Looking for Lincoln book series program derived from the wayside project. Having written the content for waysides, particularly those in the state capital, the first book *Lincoln’s Springfield* derived from that research and was published in 2015. The same author (Bryon C. Andreasen) also authored *Lincoln and Mormon Country*, the second book in the series (2015). A small percentage of revenue is donated to Looking for Lincoln, the remainder is paid to the authors and publisher, Southern Illinois University (SIU).

After the publication of the first two books, *A Guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit* (2017, Guy C. Braker) and *Historic House of Lincoln's Illinois* (2018, Erika Holst) followed. All four books can now be purchased via SIU and Amazon. While distribution has been satisfactory (Figure 8), LFL staff shared that the book series did not take off as anticipated; presently, there is no plan to publish additional books.

Lastly, the impact of the book series expands beyond the production of print media. For example, *A Guide to Lincoln's Eighth Judicial Circuit* was intended as a way to promote recreational tourism, wherein travelers would move through the ALNHA landscape to the courthouses of the judicial circuit.

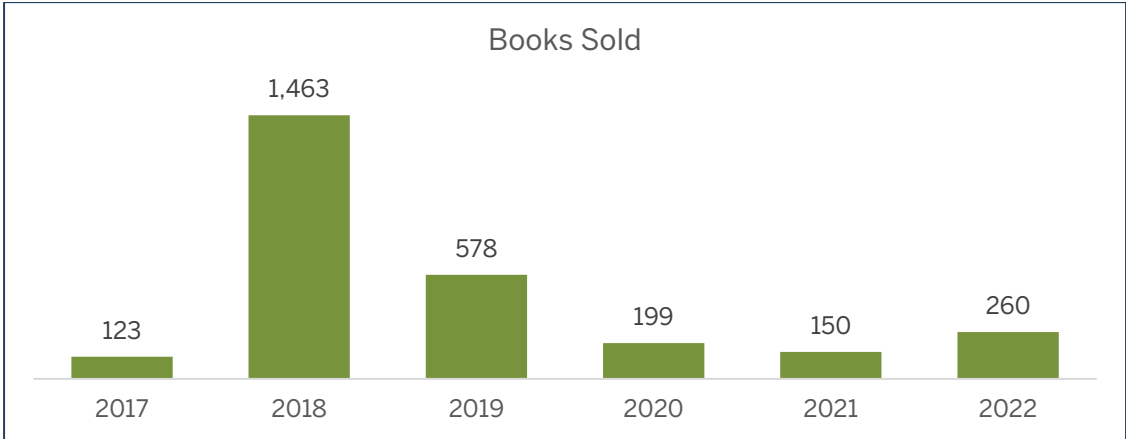


Figure 8: Looking for Lincoln in Illinois Book Series Sales

Looking for Lincoln Conversations

The Conversations program is among LFL's more recent programs; it was initiated in FY2020 during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because LFL, its partners, and communities could not facilitate in-person programming, LFL sought to pivot to online, virtual programs.

Through this program, LFL seeks to tell a story about Lincoln's life or times with a broad audience approximately once per month. These online programs are often facilitated via Facebook and feature 30-35 minutes of presentation on a topic by a subject matter expert, followed by a question-and-answer session. During the evaluation's team attendance at one of these events, they observed that the event was professionally produced, of high quality, and well-facilitated by LFL staff (Figure 9). These virtual programs facilitate an audience from across the Midwest and the United States. They are then posted to YouTube for asynchronous viewing. This is publication format that also aids in the development of a valuable online library of programming.

In FY2020, six LFL Conversations resulted in 3,499 views on Facebook and YouTube. FY2021 featured 19 LFL Conversations and 4,600 views; FY2022 featured 11 LFL Conversations and 2,214 views. As of late April 2023, 7 LFL Conversations had 1,033 views. One hypothesis explaining this peak in views is likely due to the demand for virtual programming during the pandemic, which likely waned somewhat as many organizations—including Looking for Lincoln, its partners, and communities—began to re-introduce live programming.

“Why is it important that we still study the life of Abraham Lincoln in the 21st century?”

– Concluding question at the April 12, 2023, LFL Conversation posed by LFL staff to the subject matter experts presenting

“Abraham Lincoln is the most important and significant president in American history. If history had turned out differently during his presidency, you and I would be living in a much different America.”

– Response provided by subject matter expert

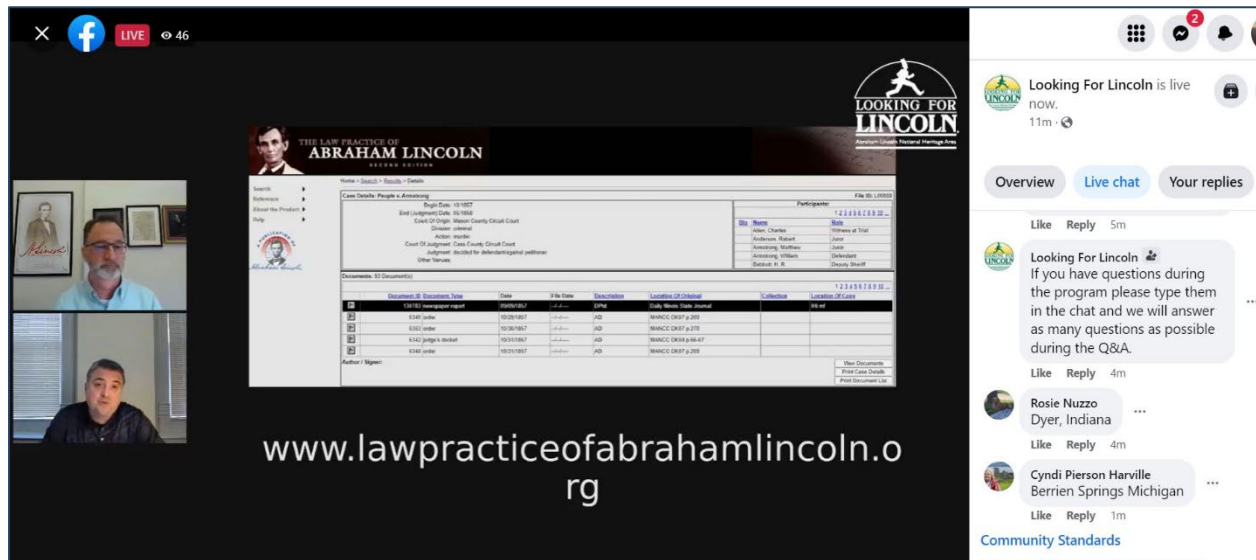


Figure 9: Screenshot of LFL Conversation on April 12, 2023 “More than Just the Almanac: Abraham Lincoln & the Duff Armstrong Murder Case.”

Note. The Conversation had as many as forty-six individuals logged in at one time as well as individuals logged in from nine states, from Maine to California.

Looking for Lincoln Stories

Also initiated during the COVID-19 pandemic, the LFL Stories program is published in video and podcast formats. The first video was launched July 2022 and since then eight have been produced. The format of the LFL Stories facilitates reaching new or broader audiences with content that seeks new directions and topics about the life and times of Abraham Lincoln. Production of LFL Stories also involves paid or in-kind opportunities for local musicians, actors, and other creative professionals. The evaluation team listened to several podcasts in the LFL Conversations and noted their quality of storytelling and production.

LFL Stories seeks to center groups of people who have been excluded from many historical accounts of that time, such as the stories of Black Americans and women. A recent video production is the *New Philadelphia Illinois: A Racially Diverse Community on the Illinois Frontier* film. This video’s production was led and funded by LFL to help promote one of the newest NPS units: New Philadelphia National Historic Site. The evaluation team attended this film premiere and noted the quality of the event management as well as the video itself (Figure 10).

One recent unique and compelling podcast centered the story of a Civil War soldier from Illinois, Albert Cashier, who had been assigned female at birth and whom many scholars

believe that, if he were alive today, might identify as a transgender man. This example is one of several efforts that LFL has engaged in to tell “new” and “previously neglected” stories that would be more relevant to diverse audiences.

Like LFL Conversations, the LFL Stories program predominately evaluates impact based on the number of views (videos) and listens (podcasts). While the podcast series is new, as of March 2023, approximately 125 individuals had listened in on at least one of the eight episodes.



Figure 10: Audience members watch the New Philadelphia Illinois: A Racially Diverse Community on the Illinois Frontier film begins at its premiere, Saturday April 22nd (hosted by LFL, event at Lincoln Home National Historic Site). Photos by Kristina Anderson, Epley Institute.

Traveling Exhibits

The Traveling Exhibit activity began in 2019 and originated out of the partnership with the NPS Lincoln Home National Historic Site. The Illinois Freedom Project, a traveling exhibit, tells a narrative describing the Illinois place-based journey from slavery to freedom in the 18th-20th centuries. Utilizing NPS materials that had been in storage, LFL staff collaborated with NPS interpretive staff and local historians to develop the exhibit. Since it began in 2019, nearly one-quarter of a million have attended museums or sites hosting the exhibit (Figure 11).

This exhibit can be set up across the heritage area and requires little staff time from local volunteers or community members, as the exhibit is pre-developed. There is no application process, and all LFL communities are invited to request use of it, supported by LFL staff who coordinate the effort, attend exhibit openings, and report impact. NPS contributes staff time by having interpretive staff develop and install the exhibit.

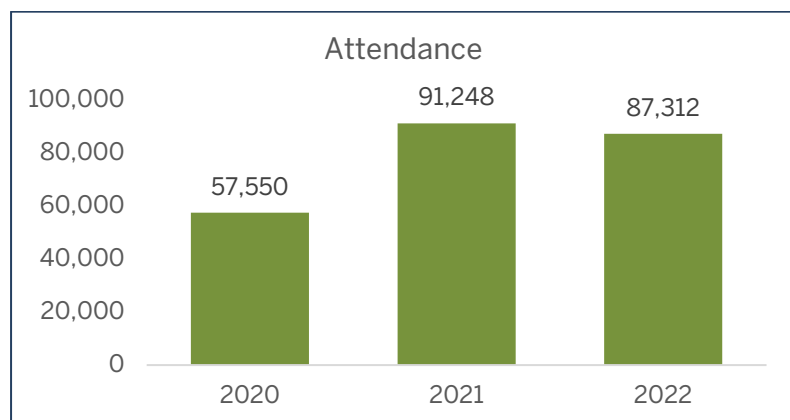


Figure 11: Attendance at Illinois Freedom Project Traveling Exhibits
 Note: Attendance numbers provided by Looking for Lincoln staff.

LEAD Academy

The LEAD Academy program is a leadership program for eighth grade youth with emerging leadership potential. LFL identified this age as the target group based on research that identified the pivotal nature of this time in young peoples' lives, as they are eager, ready to learn, and are also preparing to enter high school, a period in which young people have many opportunities to hold leadership roles. Participants are identified for the program by partner organizations in the local area. During a weeklong program, youth participants grapple with Abraham Lincoln's influence and leadership qualities, while developing their own leadership skills along the way. Throughout the week, youth participants are paired with mentors who build community with them and serve as guides on their leadership journey.

The LEAD Academy program is a unique partnership between the NPS Lincoln Home National Historic Site, Union Pacific, and Illinois College (previously)/Southern Illinois University (currently). This partnership model was noted in one interview as catalyzing: Without LFL staff and capacity, the ability of other partners to implement the program alone was characterized as not feasible.

In its first year, youth participant count totaled 32 (FY2016); after that year participant counts total 37 (FY2017), 47 (FY2018), 39 (FY2019), 15 (FY2020) and 12 (FY2023). These values reflect (a) that the program was suspended for two years due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and related concerns and (b) a change in the program model in more recent years.

However, this program cannot be measured by participation alone: Several participants in the evaluation's interviews described the LEAD Academy as a unique and special program. One opportunity for this program's expanded impact is aiding other institutions (both within the ALNHA and those outside of it, such as other NHAs), in using it as a template or model.

Illinois Monarch Project

LFL has also served in a support role with respect to the Illinois Monarch Project, as part of a nationwide Operation Pollination project organized by Rotary International, a 501(c)(4) organization. The goal of the Illinois Monarch Project is to preserve monarch butterfly habitat. Because of LFL's relationships across the ALNHA, it has connected its partner and community network with the Operation Pollination Project. Since 2018 nine LFL partner organizations and fourteen LFL communities have signed pollinator pledges. LFL also served as a link between groups including Chicago's Field Museum and Lincoln College in order to

pilot the project. These efforts are connected to the landscape initiative (Goal 6) of the Management Plan.

3.2.2 Community Building

The ALNHA evaluation logic model includes three Community Building activities: Self-assessments, Community Designations, and Capacity workshops. However, both interview data and informal observations indicated that LFL staff provide substantial amounts of informal assistance to LFL communities beyond the three Community Building activities that follow. These include everyday technical and operational assistance, programmatic support, relationship building, and consultation via phone, email, and other mechanisms.

Self-assessments

Designation as a Looking for Lincoln Community is a formal designation with an established process that is documented and shared with interested communities. First, the community contacts LFL to discuss their interest, forms a Working Group, and completes a self-assessment, which is designed and structured by LFL (Figure 12).

The self-assessment asks the community's LFL Working Group to reflect on and document whether the community is actively telling its unique Lincoln story/stories and how those stories can be responsibly shared with the community in an accessible manner. It asks them to demonstrate how they are preserving their sense of place, to identify a visitor center (or other public location where visitors can receive information on area attractions), and to create an action plan that articulates what the community intends to accomplish.

While the specifics of each community's Lincoln story and how it is shared will vary, in general, LFL Communities preserve and interpret the story/stories of the life and times of Abraham Lincoln in their community, implement LFL programs, and promote the heritage area to residents and visitors.

During interviews, community representatives indicated that the self-assessment process is rigorous and time-intensive, but valuable to set them up for success and to ensure they have a well-documented and evidence-based Lincoln story that is tangible to residents and visitors.

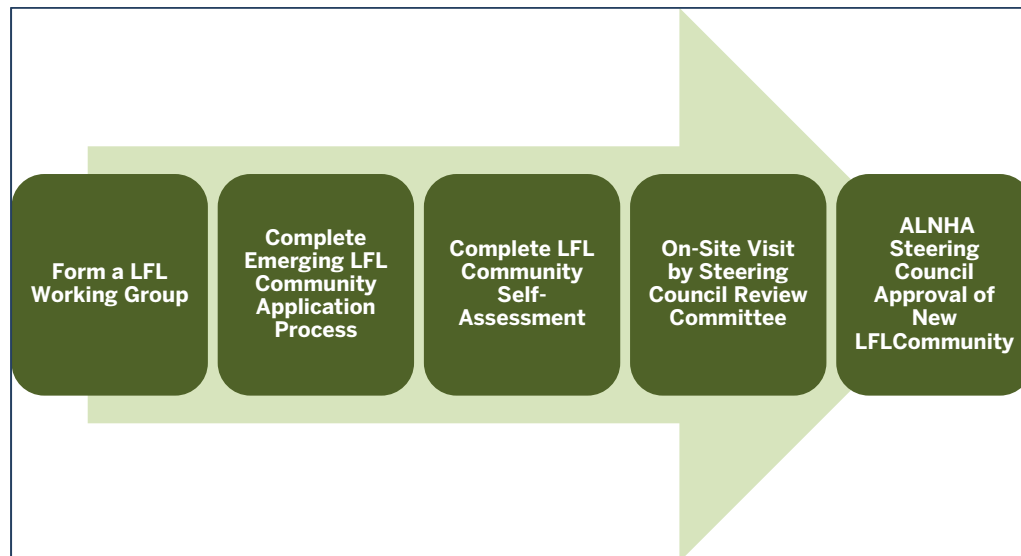


Figure 12: LFL Community Designation Process

Community Designations

After the self-assessment is complete, the next step in designating a community is an on-site assessment. A review committee from LFL's Steering Council conducts the on-site assessment, after which the ALNHA Steering Council approves the designation (if all requirements are met). The new LFL Community appoints a member of their Working Group to serve on the LFL Steering Council.

This process, from start to finish, usually takes a community approximately two years. LFL staff continue working with communities throughout this process which includes numerous visits to the communities, phone calls, emails, and Zoom meetings as needed. After becoming a community partner, they develop a community agreement (i.e., documented Memorandum of Understanding) and create an action plan.

Conversations with community representatives indicated that the LFL community designation, the affiliation to the National Park Service, and the geographic connection across the ALNHA are particularly valuable. These affiliations provide credibility and legitimacy to their work. Interviews characterize the community designation as "having taken [them] to a whole new level" and "doing a lot because we had just been getting started." Longstanding communities also recognize the value of the Community Designation program; one representative described how the process keeps them focused, prompts them to document past progress, and helps them structure their plans for each year. Seeking to balance action and documentation, communities self-evaluate their progress.

The importance and value of the LFL community designation was shared repeatedly in interviews. One individual shared: "Before LFL, if it didn't come out of Springfield, it didn't exist." LFL [facilitated] a multitude of stories to be told." Recent additions to the LFL Communities cohort include Atlanta (2015), Edgar County-Paris (2017), LaSalle County (2018), Jonesboro, Pontiac, and Freeport (2019), and Macomb (2021).

Capacity Workshops

Capacity workshops, also called trainings, are another program area designed to support the network of LFL communities (both emerging and existing). These capacity workshops are organized and often led by LFL staff, although sometimes feature invited, expert speakers who provide training services on an in-kind or payment basis. Originally held in-person, capacity workshops have now fully transitioned to virtual formats due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The latter format also facilitates recording and online, asynchronous access.

Table 9 illustrates how the number and type of capacity workshops have grown over time. In particular, the topics have become more diverse (now representing topics such marketing, programming, and interpretation). LFL also determines topics based on demand and feedback from communities. Several interviewees described the workshops as particularly valuable resources; without them, they would not otherwise have access to relevant, no cost, and high-quality training.

Evidence suggests that impacts extend beyond workshop attendees. One interviewee indicated that a member of his community has attended nearly all workshops and makes a habit of sharing learnings with their LFL community working group members. To that end, the question regarding "output vs. outcomes"—voiced by one interviewee—may be relevant in this activity area. While workshops are tracked predominantly via outputs (e.g., attendance, number of organizations represented), exploring outcomes—such as identifying ways in which learnings have been applied—is an area for further LFL exploration as workshops are designed to catalyze communities' impact.

Table 9: LFL Capacity Workshop Snapshot

Year	Count	Attendance	Organizations Represented	Example Workshops
2016	1	43	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building & Sustaining a Successful Volunteer Program
2017	3	18	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building & Sustaining a Successful Volunteer Program
2018	2	24	19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximizing the Resources and Brand of Looking for Lincoln and the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area • Tips for Fundraising and Grant Writing
2019	2	37	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tips for Fundraising and Grant Writing • Resources for Your Looking for Lincoln Community
2020	4	49	43	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing on a Cheap to Zero Budget • The Nuts & Bolts on How to Produce Targeted Facebook Ad
2021	7	77	65	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing on a Cheap to Zero Budget • The Nuts and Bolts of How to Produce Targeted Marketing Ads • How to Host Virtual Programming Using StreamYard • Utilizing Your Life-Size Flat Lincolns
2022	4	44	26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flat Lincoln Scavenger Hunt • LFL Training 101 • ALNHA Interpretive Plan • LFL Signature Events

3.2.3 Marketing & Promotion

The ALNHA logic model outlines several activities in the activity area of Marketing and Promotion; a description of each of these follows. However, LFL’s work in marketing and promotion warrants context at a level greater than a description of individual activities. Many communities described LFL’s overall promotion and marketing activities as perhaps the largest source of value. Efforts in this area were described as remarkable, providing legitimacy at a large scale (particularly its connection to NPS). Some interviewees reported direct links to tourism, wherein visitors verbally or via documentation (sign in sheets) describe LFL promotion or marketing efforts as the impetus for their visit. During community input conversations, several individuals shared that they had seen Lincoln-related road signage.

Because of this record of impact, one identified area for future growth is developing a framework that might help determine future efforts in this area. While a few community input participants reported recognizing the Looking for Lincoln logo, many did not, and one interviewee acknowledged that neither LFL nor ALNHA may never be “household names.” This assessment aligns with the evaluation team’s observations in two ways. First, many community input participants understood they were in “Lincoln country” due to the general emphasis on Lincoln in the area; however, few had detailed knowledge regarding the focus or management of specific Lincoln-related institutions. Second, the research team observed—both with respect to the ALNHA evaluation but also in other projects—that members of the general public are unlikely to know the difference between land designations (e.g., National Heritage Area vs. State Historic Site). However, what is important in the LFL context is their promotion of local and grassroots organizations across the ALNHA and that the organization

has aided in the promotion of communities across the landscape, particularly outside of Springfield. Given this context, determining ways to measure marketing and promotion outcomes for LFL communities due to LFL marketing and promotion efforts may be a next step for the organization.

Website

LFL manages and leads many efforts to market and promote the ALNHA, including its website. The website is perceived as the anchor of LFL’s marketing efforts, and LFL has invested in it accordingly. A recent investment in its redesign sought to ensure a modern and consistent look and feel. During interviews, the LFL website was credited as a resource that helps promote communities. The LFL website includes up-to-date content such as:

- An easy-to-use interactive map indicating information about sites across the ALNHA, including Lincoln-Douglas debate sites, 8th Judicial Circuit sites, NPS passport sites, Underground railroad sites, wayside exhibits, historic homes, and many more
- Community-specific pages and content corresponding to each ALNHA designated community
- Pre-planned Itineraries, such as “Lincoln the Lawyer,” “Lincoln in Danville,” “Lincoln in Logan County (Atlanta, Lincoln, Mt. Pulaski),” “Discover Lincoln on Illinois’ Route 66,” and several more
- A calendar of events featuring LFL events (e.g., LFL Conversations) as well as LFL Signature Events
- Several others

Social Media

LFL maintains several social media accounts that promote its work and market the ALNHA and its communities; one benefit of social media is that it is generally a low- or no-cost resource and can result in an expanded audience and virality. It also uses some platforms to deliver programming (such as the LFL Conversation held via Facebook Live). Facebook is among its most popular social media accounts with respect to follower counts (Figure 13). In addition to these platforms, LFL also has a podcast series (i.e., corresponding with LFL Stories program), which can be accessed via Spotify, Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, Stitcher, and the LFL website.



Figure 12: LFL Social Media Followers
Note. Followers as of early June 2023.

Signage

Developing a physical “look and feel” across the ALNHA has also been important to LFL. Directional and informational signage featuring the LFL and ALNHA brand identity can be found throughout the ALNHA (Figure 14). Some counties or communities have invested in additional signage. More recently, LFL led an effort to have signs indicating entrance into the ALNHA on all major highways and interstates in the region. During community input, several visitors indicated they had observed Lincoln-related signage when driving into the area. Interview conversations also indicated that the positioning and consistent branding from signage was valuable.



Figure 13: Examples of LFL-branded Signage. Photos by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.

Visitor Guide

LFL develops and distributes a physical and digital Visitor Guide annually that is free to the public. This Visitor Guide provides valuable information about sites, attractions, and communities across the ALNHA (Figure 15). It also recoups costs (through providing advertising space). It features a professional graphic layout. During the evaluation team’s travels throughout the ALNHA, copies of the Visitor Guide were observed and available at several sites. During interviews, representatives from ALNHA communities shared their appreciation for their community’s inclusion and the overall quality of the resource. In addition, two community input participants shared that they had seen the Visitor Guide at a visitor center and a hotel during their travels.



Figure 14: The 2023-2024 Looking for Lincoln Official Visitors Guide. Cover at left, Introductory material explaining NHAs at right.

Flat Lincoln

Flat Lincoln is a marketing program that began in 2019; its goal is to encourage the public to discover history wherever they go. Members of the public are encouraged to visit historic sites and bring along their “Flat Lincoln,” take photos, and tag their visit with #FlatLincoln. Flat Lincolns are available online but also printed and distributed by LFL, free of cost to communities. Like the Visitor Guide, Flat Lincolns were found throughout the ALNHA, observed both in the individual (handheld) size, as well as larger versions that are made available to community sites, such as historic sites and local Convention & Visitors Bureaus (Figure 16). Notably, the Flat Lincoln program is also an example of an adaptive strategy. Previously, LFL relied on a “History in Your Backyard” program, which relied on a specific “Abe” interpreter who had been hired for that program. The Flat Lincoln program was designed to replace that initiative, as Flat Lincoln is easier to replicate and less dependent on one individual.



Figure 15: Large and handheld Flat Lincolns Greet Visitors at the Vermilion County Museum. Photo by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.

Illinois State Fair

LFL utilizes the Illinois State Fair as an education/interpretive opportunity (see: Living History program) as well as an outreach opportunity. LFL first attended the State Fair in 2012 a year prior to the Management Plan’s approval (see Section 2.3 - Timeline). While much of its programming targets individuals who may already have an interest in Abraham Lincoln, history, or the central Illinois region, LFL staff shared that the benefit of their Illinois State Fair presence is that this event is attended by a wide variety of members of the public. They view their attendance and promotional activities at the state fair as outreach that may pique interest in or inform about the heritage area in a way that other marketing efforts do not, due to the breadth and quantity of individuals in attendance. While paused for a few years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LFL planned to return to the fair in 2023.

3.2.4 Sustainability

LFL engages in many activities related to the organization’s financial sustainability. This includes grantmaking activities, maintaining corporate support, fostering donations, and tracking in-kind match. A detailed description of the organization’s financial sustainability is provided in Section 4: Investments in NHA Activities. These activities are mentioned here for two reasons (1) they represent a component of some staff time (i.e., time spent planning for

and investing in the organization's financial future) and (2) they are exemplary of longstanding partnerships.

The latter part, that the organization's ongoing relationships are valuable, was part of a recurring pattern that emerged during the evaluation related to sustainability and impact. Across many interviews and observations conducted over the course of the evaluation, evidence indicated that the LFL staff valued, invested in, and maintained relationships between communities, organizations, individuals, and sites.

LFL leadership characterized this phenomenon as being "the glue," i.e., they are a "glue" organization that binds and connects many institutions together. Many interviews supported this characterization, some noting that this "glue" role is one that no other organization can fill in the "Lincoln space" (See Section 2.1.3). Essential to this "glue" or "hub" role was that interviewees characterized LFL as an organization that is very trustworthy and that highly values collaboration, which allows them to build relationships that catalyze impact. Each of the following quotes reflects commentary from a different individual:

They provide support, experience, expertise, and representation...I don't know if we'd have something without them. They are indispensable for communities like us. – Community representative

[One of the things] that makes it interesting...they have no authority or standing at the different government levels they work with. It takes cooperation with those organizations, and they've done this well – LFL leadership

"[LFL staff] can bridge divides and demonstrate that there's value in working together" –Partner

"They are good about being a hub to get the word out." – Community representative

"You have one strong center base—Looking for Lincoln. Another organization could not do this [but LFL can] because of their broad geographic range and that they encompass Lincoln's life and times, his role as a man, attorney, president..." – Community representative

"They bring all the sites together, coordinate initiatives. I later learned how valuable that is, in comparison to other [organizations] that focus on self-preservation." – Partner

"We didn't have any connections of any kind until we got with LFL...I'm amazed at how they coordinate everything." – Community representative

"One of their superpowers is helping to make new connections." – Partner

"Partnering [with LFL] has strengthened the application [for a grant, making our application] broader and more collaborative." – Partner

"They've done a really good job binding us all together." LFL leadership

Feedback during interviews indicated that LFL has and is likely to maintain a crucial and sustainable role as an organizational "hub." An opportunity for reflection around

sustainability as it relates to activities and strategies—and characterized in one interview—is considering the balance between LFL increasingly developing its own programming (e.g., LFL branded programs, exhibit design) versus aiding LFL communities in their programming efforts. ALNHA’s original management plan states: “Most projects, however, will be undertaken by local partners within their own communities under the auspices of heritage area programming” (Section 1.1). In one conversation, a partner expressed interest in more opportunities to contribute to LFL’s program development activities, particularly those that related to their community.

The balance between these two efforts is challenging, as discussions with staff have also illuminated that due to circumstances like the volunteer nature of community working groups or their turnover, not all communities have capacity to lead in the development and implementation of new programs. In sum, a continued attention to mission and activities that are central to it is important for LFL as it is with all nonprofit organizations.

3.3 Summary and Assessments of Impact

The evaluation’s first research question asked: “Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the heritage area achieved its proposed accomplishments?” As a result, the evaluation team sought to summarize and assess impact in alignment with both the authorizing legislation and management plan.

Table 10 summarizes and assesses LFL’s impact on each purpose of its authorizing legislation. Most purposes have been met, and those that have been achieved in part (1, 5) were generally due to strategic decisions made and communicated by LFL. In addition, Table 10 identifies a few areas in which documented evidence do not necessarily differentiate based on details outlined in the authorizing legislation (i.e., differentiated between cultural and recreational tourism, tracking interpretive efforts featuring Native American vs. African American heritage). While these areas may be areas for growth or opportunity for LFL, deviation from initial plans is common as organizations evolve and make strategic decisions based on available resources.

Key context with respect to the ALNHA’s authorizing legislation purposes and subsequent Management Plan goals is that during this time (after NHA designation and continuing through the plan’s development) the total federal NPS-NHA funding allocation amount was unclear and was anticipated to approach \$1 million annually. As a result, the management plan, in particular, was developed with a large allocation assumption; however, allocations have historically been between \$150,000-\$300,000 and more recently (2022) approached and exceeded \$400,000 (see Section 4.2). As a result, over the years LFL has made efforts to let some partners specialize in areas of expertise (e.g., preservation and physical legacy stewardship) and de-prioritized some topics initially outlaid in their management plan (e.g., agricultural legacy, natural resource conservation, recreational tourism). In sum, LFL has honored the purposes of its authorizing legislation and its Management Plan goals.

Table 10: Alignment Between Authorizing Legislation and Impact

Authorizing Legislation Purpose	Summary of Impact	Assessment of Impact
<p>1. To recognize the significant natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the study titled “Feasibility Study of the Proposed Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area” prepared for the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition in 2002 and revised in 2007;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aids communities in identifying their Lincoln “legacies” via self-assessments, community designations (3.2.2) • Recognizes the cultural “life and times” of Lincoln across many program areas (3.2.1) • Contributes to work that recognizes natural legacies through the Illinois Monarch Project (3.2.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LFL has achieved this purpose in strong, documented ways, excelling in maintaining the cultural legacy of Lincoln’s life and times in particular • While LFL does not emphasize natural legacies in its current programming, this was a strategic decision based on the strength and resources of its partners in this area as well as its NPS-NHA funding allocation.
<p>2. to promote heritage, cultural and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes tourism to LFL communities through a variety of outlets and particularly the Visitor Guide, website information, and signage initiatives (3.2.3) • Has developed several interpretive and educational programs such as LFL Conversations and Stories and facilitated programs such as Signature Events; many new efforts in this area seek to tell previously “untold” stories that would be relevant to diverse audiences (3.2.1) • Has demonstrated ability to innovate in this area, such as via the LEAD Academy for youth leadership development, a unique program that could serve as a model for other NHAs (3.2.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LFL has particularly excelled in its promotion of tourism via support and promotion of LFL communities and its wide variety of educational and interpretive programming • Identifying community-based outcomes because of LFL marketing and promotional efforts may be a next step in evaluating impact. Also, evidence collected by the evaluation team did not necessarily differentiate between cultural and recreational tourism; strategically differentiating between these two areas may be an opportunity for increased impact
<p>3. to recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key periods in the growth of America, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports efforts to recognize and interpret important events (e.g., Lincoln-Douglas debates, important Circuit cases, Presidential nomination) as well as locations (e.g., New Philadelphia Historic Site, Lincoln Home National Historic Site (3.2.1, 3.2.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LFL also excels in this area of recognizing and interpreting key events and locations • Tracking and differentiating programming by key periods and groups in these efforts (e.g., Native American, African American) is one prospective area for programmatic impact.
<p>4. to recognize and interpret the distinctive role the region played in shaping the man who would become the 16th President of the United States, and how Abraham Lincoln’s life left its traces in the stories, folklore, buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes of the region;</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has focused educational and interpretive efforts on both Lincoln’s regional history (throughout the heritage areas and in LFL Communities specifically) and distinctive legacy (e.g., via LFL conversations) (3.2.1, supporting evidence in 2.2.3) • LFL’s programmatic efforts have included streetscapes and landscapes (e.g., waysides), stories (e.g., LFL book series), and other elements (3.2.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LFL has maintained focus on the 16th president and Lincoln’s time in the region (including the spaces, stories, and places that shaped him) • Planning for long-term sustainability of interpretive and educational programs is another potential area for future planning; for example, several individuals acknowledged that the wayside program is one of LFL’s greatest impacts; however, there is no LFL plan to support repair or replacement costs.

Authorizing Legislation Purpose	Summary of Impact	Assessment of Impact
<p>5. to provide a cooperative management framework to foster a close working relationship with all levels of government, the private sector, and the local communities in the region in identifying, preserving, interpreting, and developing the historical, cultural, scenic, and natural resources of the region for the educational and inspirational benefit of current and future generations; and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has used Community Designations to support and legitimize LFL communities, which in turn catalyzes their growth and impact (3.2.2) • Has developed and coordinated a robust relationship with all levels of government (2.2.2; 2.2.4; 3.4), the private sector, and local communities (2.2.3) • Has built a successful organization with clearly defined management responsibilities (2.2.2 with supporting evidence in 3.2.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many forms of evidence indicate that LFL has succeeded in this purpose area; its staff have demonstrated excellence in building working relationships and partnering with local communities • As identified in Purpose 1, LFL does not emphasize natural resources, which is a result of a strategic and financial decision
<p>6. to provide appropriate linkages between units of the National Park System and communities, governments, and organizations within the Heritage Area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has served as a crucial “hub” that catalyzes impact in the region (3.2.4) • Has been a conduit through which the NPS impacts communities outside of park units via programming (3.2.1) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LFL has built strong partnerships with national NHA leadership as well as their local NPS unit, connecting those organizations to its network of partners and communities

The evaluation team also conducted a crosswalk linking the organization’s goals outlined in the Management Plan (2013) to its authorizing legislation purposes. The crosswalk also sought to characterize the degree to which the goal has been attained, documenting this determination with notes (Table 11). The evaluation team assesses that all goals have been met, at least in part.

Table 11: Management Plan Crosswalk and Assessment of Goal Attainment

Management Plan Goal	Authorizing Legislation Purpose	Assessment of Goal Attainment & Supporting Evidence
1. Maximize the heritage area's effectiveness through strong partnerships that link communities, sites, organizations, ideas, and actions.	5, 6	Attainment of this goal is documented throughout this section and in the prior table. In particular, see section 3.2.4.
2. Create engaging experiences that connect places and stories throughout the heritage area and promote public awareness of the region's history, culture, and significance.	2, 3, 4	Attainment of this goal is documented throughout this section and in the prior table. In particular, see sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.
3. Promote heritage, cultural, and recreational tourism and related heritage development that support increased economic activity and investment in heritage resources.	2, 5	Attainment of this goal is documented throughout this section and in the prior table. In particular, see section 3.2.3. Additional information regarding economic impact is documented in Section 4.4.1.
4. Participate in a national dialogue on keeping America's promise by examining national issues associated with the Antebellum period and in particular Abraham Lincoln's life and evolving thought.	1, 3, 4	Attainment of this goal is documented throughout chapter and in the prior table. In particular, see section 3.2.1.
5. Raise public consciousness about the needs and benefits of preserving the historic and cultural legacies of central Illinois.	1, 3	Attainment of this goal is documented in part; in particular, see section 3.2.1. However, raising public consciousness is an ambitious goal. While likely achieved in part or indirectly through programming, current metrics and documentation do not track degree of attainment of this goal. In the future, LFL might consider ways to formally or informally measure the impact of programming, particularly in ways that expand beyond participant counts (e.g., checks for understanding or meaning).
6. Facilitate initiatives for the preservation and stewardship of the region's physical legacy of historic resources, communities, and landscapes.	1, 5, 6	Partial attainment of this goal is documented; in particular, see in sections 4.2 and 5.4. LFL recognizes that some of its partners specialize in specific areas, such as preservation and physical legacy stewardship. As a result, they intentionally and strategically support, rather than lead, in some areas.
7. Strengthen the ability of sites and resources associated with Abraham Lincoln and his legacy to achieve long-term sustainability.	2, 5, 6	Partial attainment of this goal is documented; in particular, see section 3.2.2. LFL's programming includes important Community Building activities that do build capacity. However, current metrics or documentation do not measure long-term outcomes of LFL communities or partners.
8. Encourage and facilitate the enhancement of community character and quality of life related to the region's heritage for the benefit of residents and to strengthen the visitor experience.	2, 3, 4	Attainment of this goal is documented throughout this section and in the prior table. In particular, see sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.

Overall, through evidence presented in this Section 3 and summarized in Tables 10 and 11, the work of LFL has resulted in the ALNHA having a substantial and lasting influence on the central Illinois region. The organization has made great impacts in its efforts to work collaboratively and to tell the quality stories of Abraham Lincoln's life and times in a way that

provides high quality experiences for visitors, economic opportunities for communities, and improve the quality of life for residents.

3.4 Relationship with the National Park Service

As a federally designated program, the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area is administered in partnership with the NPS. In fact, one of the explicit purposes of the national heritage area, described in ALNHA's designating legislation, is "to provide appropriate linkages between units of the National Park System and communities, governments, and organizations within the Heritage Area" (Public Law 110-229, Subtitle C, Sec. 441. Purposes).

The ALNHA's Management Plan includes further information about how this partnership with NPS may operate. In addition to the annual funding provided by NPS, the park service also provides LFL with technical assistance, support, and guidance in creating and implementing heritage area programming at both regional and local levels. Nationally, LFL works closely with the NPS Midwest Regional Office, which manages heritage area programs in the region (LFL, 2014, Section 1-8).

LFL also specifically states in its Management Plan that on a local level "we maintain a close working relationship with the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, whose staff participates in our organizational structure and programs." One example of this partnership is the two institutions' collaboration on the Illinois Freedom Project Traveling Exhibit. On that project, NPS and LFL developed a concept for a traveling exhibit based on existing NPS materials; LFL helped to promote and coordinate the exhibit schedule, whereas NPS installs the exhibit across LFL communities (for further detail, see Section 3.2.1). For additional examples of LFL and Lincoln Home National Historic Site partnership, see *Looking for Lincoln Stories* (also section 3.2.1) and *Investments in NHA Activities* (Section 4.2).

Looking for Lincoln completes SF425 Financial Forms and Annual Program Progress Reports, including Part I: Funding Report and Part II: Progress Report, each year for the National Park Service and submits them in a timely manner. They also submit an annual workplan, which sets tasks and anticipated outcomes by ALNHA program area. These are the primary forms of communication between the two agencies for progress and status updates. In addition to formal reports, there are also more informal channels of communication with NPS staff, and the relationship between the two agencies is characterized as a positive one. Stakeholders interviewed as part of this report described it as a collaborative, open, and trusting relationship.

SECTION 4: PUBLIC/PRIVATE INVESTMENTS IN ALNHA AND THEIR IMPACTS



*Lincoln's home in Springfield, part of the Lincoln Home National Historic Site (National Park Service unit), and just down the block from the Looking for Lincoln office space.
Photo by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.*

4.1 Designating Legislation

This section seeks to answer the evaluation question's second question, "What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?"

Pursuant to the goals and requirements of its designating legislation for ALNHA, Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition collects and reports investments in the ALNHA and their sources, including contributions from federal, state, local, individuals and non-profit organizations, and volunteer and in-kind contributions, as well as programmatic and operational expenses.

Specifically, the designating legislation, Public Law 110-229, states:

SEC. 446. Local Coordinating Entity.

(a) Duties.—To further the purposes of the National Heritage Area, the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, as the local coordinating entity, shall— ...

(2) submit an annual report to the secretary for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this subtitle, specifying—

(A) the specific performance goals and accomplishments of the local coordinating entity;

(B) the expenses and income of the local coordinating entity;

(C) the amounts and sources of matching funds;

(D) the amounts leveraged with Federal funds and sources of the leveraging; and

(E) grants made to any other entities during the fiscal year;

(3) make available for audit for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity

receives Federal funds under this subtitle, all information pertaining to the expenditure of the funds and any matching funds; and

(4) encourage economic viability and sustainability that is consistent with the purposes of the National Heritage Area....

SEC. 449. Authorization of Appropriations.

(a) Authorization of Appropriations. — Subject to subsection (b), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subtitle not more than \$1,000,000 for any fiscal year. Funds so appropriated shall remain available until expended.

(b) Limitation on Total Amounts Appropriated. — Not more than \$15,000,000 may be appropriated to carry out this subtitle.

(c) Cost-sharing Requirement. — The Federal share of the total cost of any activity under this subtitle shall be not more than 50 percent; the non-Federal contribution may be in the form of in-kind contributions of goods or services fairly valued.

Financial data was collected primarily via annual auditor's reports of LFL Internal Revenue Service 990 tax forms as well Annual Progress Reports (Parts I and II) provided by LFL. These were supplemented with cooperative agreements, their modifications, and reporting requirements (e.g., SF 425 Financial Forms). Because of differences in reporting structure over time, primarily with the NPS reporting requirements, consistent data was not available for all years since the ALNHA's founding in 2008. Also, as NPS reporting requirements have grown more standardized and robust over time, more recent years may make for better comparison in many cases.

4.2 Investments in NHA Activities

Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition receives direct investments from several sources: the National Park Service's National Heritage Area support (Heritage Partnership Program funding), other NPS grants and support, other federal sources, state and local sources, individuals, foundations, and non-profits, as well as in-kind support.

The sources of these investments over time are displayed in Table 12. Column A, NPS-NHA Awarded, is provided for illustrative purposes; Column B represents expended NPS-NHA investments—this latter value as well as the sum of Columns C-H are included in Total Investment (Column I). A key pattern illustrated in Table 12 is that the majority of LFL investment derives from its annual Federal NPS-NHA funding and in-kind support (Columns B & H); together, since 2008, these two sources account for approximately 90% of investments. This also indicates that most cash investments derive from federal NPS-NHA funding.

Table 12 illustrates several instances of funding from other federal sources; these are included as investments but excluded from match calculations. The \$399M received through other federal funds in FY2009 reflects the remainder of U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development grant funding that supported the initial development and installation of wayside exhibits across the state. The \$61M received in FY2016 is an example of federal pass-through funding in which LFL was the fiscal agent that administered funds for the Illinois Freedom Project from the National Park Service. Similarly, in FY2020, LFL again served as the fiscal agent for a \$50,000 National Park Service African American Civil Rights grant, which supported development of an augmented reality app about the Springfield Race Riots for the Lincoln Home National Historic Site. The latter two examples, and other cases like it (e.g., when the Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative funded a Lincoln mural in Jonesboro in FY2022), is an example of LFL serving as a catalyst for funding, using its 501(c)(3) status to support community projects that would otherwise have difficulty administering federal funding.

Other substantial grant sources included state funding for the History Comes Alive program through Illinois' Department of Commerce. Unfortunately, the funding source for this program has since been discontinued; the last year LFL received this grant was 2015 (Column E). LFL has also received other significant state funding in various years, such as through the Illinois Marketing Partnership grant program. However, some state programs are not offered every year, making state funding a useful, but unreliable, source. To that end, some interviews among LFL staff, collaborators, and Board members indicated that due to the political nuances of state government in Illinois, reliance on consistent grant opportunities from state sources is challenging.

Finally, LFL frequently receives a \$15,000-\$20,000 grant each year from the Union Pacific Foundation, which is generally a consistent source of their cash match funding (Column G). Another example of Foundation and Nonprofit funding is a grant received through the National Park Foundation for the 2014-2015 Ticket to Ride program. Private-individual sources of funding (Column F) are not an area of emphasis for LFL, and interviews supported this. For example, it is not an expectation of Board members to contribute financially beyond expertise (their contributions are included as in-kind service).

The interpretation of Table 12 warrants context. Most notably, NPS annual reporting formats changed several times over the evaluation period; as a result, comparing annual investment values is challenging. This change in reporting particularly affected in-kind investment measures; the values illustrated in Column H derive from a decision-making process made during the evaluation's data analysis and is documented in the Appendix E. Additionally, prior to 2017, the categories of Private-Individual (Column F) and Foundation & Non-Profit

(Column G) were grouped and reported together. From 2017 onward, this category was separated and reported as two different values. Of these two values (Private-Individual and Foundation & Non-Profit), contributions from nonprofits were the greater value in all years reported since 2017. Therefore, the Column F's combined value in years prior to 2017 is displayed only in that column, despite possibly including Private-Individual contributions. Further details regarding the investments outlined in Table 12 follow throughout this section.

Table 12: Direct Investments (in Dollars)

Year (FY)	A: NPS-NHA Awarded	B: NPS-NHA Expended	C: Other NPS	D: Other Federal	E: State & Local	F: Private & Individual	G: Foundation & Nonprofit	H: In-Kind	I: Total Investment
2009	148,000 ¹	148,000 ²	-	399,000	152,000	-	300,000	- ³	999,000
2010	150,000	150,000	9,000	-	192,780	-	-	3,189,639	3,541,419
2011	147,000	140,000	-	-	200,000	-	-	365,625	705,625
2012	147,000	147,000	28,246	-	291,022	-	48,000	3,406,887	3,921,155
2013	150,000	150,000	-	-	150,000	-	-	3,008,039	3,308,039
2014	300,000	300,000	-	-	301,000	-	78,500	332,724	1,012,224
2015	300,000	300,000	-	-	66,683	-	76,465 ⁴	516,496	959,644
2016	300,000	300,000	60,999	-	-	-	20,000	758,366	1,139,366
2017	300,000	300,000	115,099	-	-	77	21,150	643,530	1,079,857
2018	327,720	327,720	-	-	-	551	3,000	1,199,033	1,530,304
2019	332,097	332,097	54,600	-	36,425	6,324	57,000	717,956	1,204,401
2020	336,388	336,388	55,000	-	20,327	3,026	15,000	299,360	729,101
2021	400,000	236,369	5,700	-	4,200	795	15,000	216,374	478,438
2022	500,000	390,008	-	5,000	-	1,911	15,000	373,097	785,016
Total	3,838,205	3,557,582	328,645	404,000	1,414,436	12,684	649,115	15,027,127	21,393,588

Note. Values in Column A are derived from documented contractual agreements and modifications between NPS and LFL, except where noted. Values in Columns B-G are sourced from LFL's NPS Annual Progress Report, Part II, except where noted. In-kind contributions (Column H) derive from NPS Annual Progress Reports, Part I & II (see Appendix E).

¹Reported through Evaluation Findings report feedback from NPS staff.

²LFL provided documentation of receipt of funding December 2009 (FY2010). While not reported on FY2009 or FY2010 Annual Reports, current LFL staff reported that this likely supported operating expenses, e.g., payroll expenses during the organization's first year of federal funding.

³NPS annual reports in FY2009 do not include a section listing dollar value equivalency of volunteer hours (17,750 hours).

⁴Due to data reporting structure, this value reflects the cash match value (reported in NPS Annual Report Part I) less the state funding source value (reported in Part II).

Review of annual 990 financial statements indicates that LFL has sufficient funds to cover operational and program expenses (Table 13). While Table 13 illustrates that there have been years in which total expenses exceeded total revenues, this is likely in part due to the reporting schedule wherein IRS reporting is based on a calendar year basis, and reporting from LFL to NPS occurs on a federal fiscal year (ending September). In addition, further examination of annual 990 statements indicated that LFL has substantial reserves for an organization of its size (Table 14); these represent restriction-free funds in an endowment fund held by the Community Foundation of Central Illinois. This level of funding is equivalent to more than a year of operating costs and is considered a "rainy day" fund or one that may supplement special projects as needed.

Table 13: NPS/NHA Revenue Compared with Other Revenue Sources (in Dollars)

Year (CY)	Government Grants	Other Revenue	Total Revenue	Total Expenses
2008	656,617	361,577	1,018,194	801,836
2009	744,806	202,415	947,221	734,751
2010	579,148	3,619	582,767	618,887
2011	355,834	20,975	376,809	416,429
2012	446,607	41,829	488,436	560,536
2013	564,038	9,547	573,585	488,430
2014	521,218	16,732	537,950	539,428
2015	288,483	50,989	339,472	440,763
2016	434,585	347,555	782,140	724,927
2017	397,514	544,427	941,941	940,568
2018	287,975	51,137	339,112	382,600
2019	466,707	96,061	562,768	432,865
2020	271,448	62,668	334,116	360,566
2021	361,269	69,865	431,134	358,751
2022	376,124	63,691	439,815	437,480

Note. All information from annual Auditor’s Reports of Looking for Lincoln IRS tax returns. Total revenue and total expenses are from IRS form 990, Part XI: Reconciliation of Net Assets, lines 1 (Total Revenue) and line 2 (Total Expenses). Other revenue was calculated as total revenue less Government Grants (Part VIII, Statement of Revenue).

Table 14: Summary of Net Assets (in Dollars)

Year (CY)	Assets: Cash	Assets: Securities	Assets: Other Assets	Total Assets	Liabilities	Net Assets
2018	138,436	288,651	0	427,087	5,467	421,620
2019	215,950	336,795	884	553,629	2,106	551,523
2020	160,490	374,403	530	535,423	10,350	525,073
2021	184,748	415,118	177	600,043	2,587	597,456
2022	186,468	351,279	4,068	541,815	6,023	535,792

Note. All information from annual Auditor’s Reports of Looking for Lincoln IRS tax returns. Assets by category (e.g., Cash, Securities) are from IRS form 990, Part X: Balance Sheet. Net Assets summary from IRS form 990, Part 1: Summary.

4.2.1 Non-federal Matching Funds

NHA match expectations outline the requirements for non-federal share of annual costs; of note, match requirements are evaluated against NPS-NHA Expended funding (actual annual costs) rather than Awarded funding. The amount of reported non-federal matching funds has varied since 2009; however, this is due in part to changes in NPS report requirements and in some cases differing LFL reporting practices as the organization has evolved (Table 15).

Table 15 illustrates a few key findings and patterns:

- (1) LFL has successfully met its match requirement every year since its designation.
- (2) The match ratio has changed over time and the overall average (7.0) is higher than the most recent 5-year (2018-2022) average of 1.8. However, this latter value better reflects actual match relevant to LFL activities.
- (3) A recent 5-year match ratio of 1.8 indicates that for every \$1 in NPS-NHA funding, LFL has met it with \$1.80 in match.

Three years (2010, 2012, and 2013) featured very high reported matching funds, resulting in a match ratio (Non-Federal matching: NPS-NHA contribution) greater than twenty. These high matching funds are understood to have been driven by substantial in-kind investments reported, mostly comprised of volunteer hours. These early years of reporting included the total number of volunteer hours on heritage area-related programs/projects. As a result, was interpreted by LFL representatives to include volunteer hours at ALNHA partner sites, such as the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library & Museum, even if not directly related to LFL activities. Over time, LFL's reporting of match became more consistent as the organization evolved and aligned with the current NHA definition and guidelines for match.

Table 15: Match Ratio (in Dollars)

Year (FY)	NPS-NHA Expended Funding	Non-Federal Matching Funds	Match Ratio
2009	148,000	452,000	3.1
2010	150,000	3,382,419	22.5
2011	140,000	565,625	4.0
2012	147,000	3,745,909	25.5
2013	150,000	3,158,039	21.1
2014	300,000	712,224	2.4
2015	300,000	659,644	2.2
2016	300,000	778,366	2.6
2017	300,000	664,757	2.2
2018	327,720	1,202,584	3.7
2019	332,097	817,704	2.5
2020	336,388	337,713	1.0
2021	236,369	236,369	1.0
2022	390,008	390,008	1.0
Total	3,557,582	17,103,361	7.0
5-Year Total	1,622,582	2,984,378	1.8

Note: Values are sourced from ALNHA's NPS Annual Progress Reports. NPS-NHA Expended Funding here aligns with Table 12 Column B and Non-Federal Matching Funds reflects the sum of Columns E –H.

Overall match also includes cash match and in-kind contributions. In the most recent year, FY2022, LFL reported \$16,911 in cash match. Prior to 2015, only total match was provided on NPS Annual Reports, and the value was not broken down into in-kind and cash match categories, making comparison in these years more difficult. As a result, further exploration of match by cash and in-kind sources focuses on FY2015 and after (Table 16). Table 16 illustrates that:

- (1) In every year since 2015, greater than 75% of match derives from in-kind sources.
- (2) More specifically, in-kind investments often account for more than 90% of all match.

Table 16: Matching Funds: Cash-Match and In-Kind Investments (in Dollars)

Year (FY)	In-Kind	Cash Match	Total Match	% In-Kind
2015	516,496	143,148	659,644	78%
2016	758,366	20,000	778,366	97%
2017	643,530	21,227	664,757	97%
2018	1,199,033	3,551	1,202,584	100%
2019	717,956	99,749	817,704	88%
2020	299,360	38,353	337,713	89%
2021	216,374	19,995	236,369	92%
2022	373,097	16,911	390,008	96%
Total	4,724,213	362,933	5,087,145	93% (average)

Note. All information from ALNHA's NPS Annual Progress Report, Part I.

NPS-NHA match policies allow for in-kind match to include those volunteer activities that support the work of the local coordinating entity. In FY2022, the total volunteer count was 483, and each hour of work was valued at \$30.97 (Independent Sector, 2021). This count is determined on a per-event basis, so individuals who volunteered more than once annually would be counted for each service event. Volunteers include those who serve the organization on a volunteer basis on its committees (e.g., LFL Signature Event review committee), professionals who donate their time for LFL programming, pro-bono Abraham Lincoln interpreters, Steering Council members, and members of LFL Community Working groups. Volunteers excluded from these counts include those who directly serve other organizations or partners.

Reliance on in-kind sources of support is both a strength and a challenge with respect to financial sustainability of the ALNHA; the organization has not developed or engaged in an established fundraising plan. As an advantage, the degree of in-kind support is a positive indicator of community-driven efforts and volunteer support. However, the reliance on non-cash sources for meeting matching requirements suggests that much of LFL's funding is dependent on NPS-NHA funding. If NPS-NHA funding were to be severely reduced or eliminated, its operations may be limited under its current funding model.¹ LFL, like other local coordinating entities, does require cash funding sources to support operational and programmatic expenses that cannot be fulfilled by in-kind effort, leaving them reliant on NPS-NHA funding. Indeed, interviews with institutional leaders (staff, Board members) indicated a perception that LFL's federal NPS-NHA funding has stabilized.

Notably, this latter interpretation of findings—questioning the degree to which most NHA local coordinating entities can sustain themselves with dramatically reduced or eliminated NPS-NHA funding—was mentioned in interviews with staff, members of the LFL Board, and other key collaborators. In those interviews, individuals shared many perspectives regarding the feasibility of most NHAs being self-sustaining without NPS-NHA funding, the likelihood of substantially reduced funding occurring, and the equity of this funding model (in comparison to NPS units with no match requirements, for example).

That said, conversations with LFL leadership also indicate that they are intentional with respect to staff size. Three, full-time, salaried staff, complemented by contracted services otherwise (e.g., graphic design, marketing), means that the organization would be unlikely to need to reduce staffing levels if moderate reductions in NPS-NHA funding were to occur. Similarly, LFL has strategically decided not to increase the number of full-time salaried staff,

¹ In January 2023 P.L. 117-339 extended funding to the ALNHA through FY2037.

as institutional leadership is cognizant that some of the other sources of funding (e.g., state, grant) are more variable and less reliable over time. To that end, additional funding for specific programs, if they are funded with other, non-NPS-NHA grants or funds, are viewed as one-time expenditures. LFL does not seek to fund day-to-day operations with these sources of grant funding. In other words—LFL seeks to be a sustainable size within the federal appropriation, as it is a more sustainable and reliable revenue stream that can support day-to-day operations. In addition, another conception of the NPS-NHA funding model was shared by several individuals: That NPS-NHA funding is perceived to be essential “seed funding” that acts as a catalyst to generate projects, partners, and match.

4.3 Use of Financial Resources

4.3.1 Operational Expenses

LFL reports expenses by operational and program categories on its annual 990 reports (Table 17). Operational expenses include items such as accounting fees and insurance, as well as portions of printing/postage, office expenses, and staff time. With respect to staff time, because LFL’s salaried staff each have varying amounts of operational responsibilities, a portion of staff time (predominantly the Business Manager, and partially the Executive Director) are identified as operational expenses. In all years, operational expenses represent fewer than 30% of total expenses. To contextualize this percentage, “best practice”—with respect to what portion operational expenses should be as a percentage of total expenses—is controversial in the nonprofit industry (Bell et al., 2010). While some foundations and government entities place artificial caps or targets with respect to operations or overhead, others indicate that operational expenses within reason are justified, particularly if the investment results in greater impact. Either way, LFL’s spending on operational expenses is generally consistent and not excessive.

Table 17: Operational and Program Expenses by Calendar Year (In Dollars)

Calendar Year	Operational Expenses	Program Expenses	Total Expenses	% Operational Expenses
2008	33,009	768,827	801,836	4.1%
2009	12,526	722,225	734,751	1.7%
2010	13,416	605,471	618,887	2.2%
2011	25,498	390,931	416,429	6.1%
2012	43,772	516,764	560,536	7.8%
2013	65,037	423,393	488,430	13.3%
2014	74,170	465,258	539,428	13.7%
2015	80,552	360,211	440,763	18.3%
2016	82,629	642,298	724,927	11.4%
2017	85,426	855,142	940,568	9.1%
2018	90,091	292,509	382,600	23.5%
2019	87,875	344,990	432,865	20.3%
2020	97,461	263,105	360,566	27.0%
2021	96,887	261,864	358,751	27.0%
2022	88,534	348,946	437,480	20.2%
Total	976,883	7,261,934	8,238,817	11.9%

Note. All information from annual Auditor’s Reports of Looking for Lincoln IRS tax returns. IRS form 990, Part IX: Statement of Functional Expenses, field 25b (program expenses) and fields 25c + 25d (operational expenses).

4.3.2 Program Expenses

Figure 17 illustrates the overall estimated allocation of LFL’s program expenses by the four activities outlined in the Logic Model: Interpretation & Education (14%), Community Building (12%), Marketing and Promotion (55%), and Resource Development (19%). However, when examining program expenses by category, particularly by staff expenses and other expenses, allocations of program expenses to specific activities differ. Staff expenses are nearly split equally across the four activity areas; whereas many other expenses are associated with the Marketing & Promotion activity area (driven by expenses like the marketing consultant, graphic design services, wayside exhibits, et cetera).

Interpretation of these findings should focus on general patterns, as LFL’s financial statements do not delineate all expenses by program category. These findings also relied upon supplementary data, such as percentages used to estimate staff time associated with each workplan program area (see Note, Figure 17). With respect to these estimates, one opportunity for future consideration is that LFL might engage in time tracking to determine if estimates of staff time align with actual effort. Still, Figure 17 illustrates helpful, broad-stroke patterns, i.e., that most expenses are roughly aligned with efforts to market and promote the heritage area.

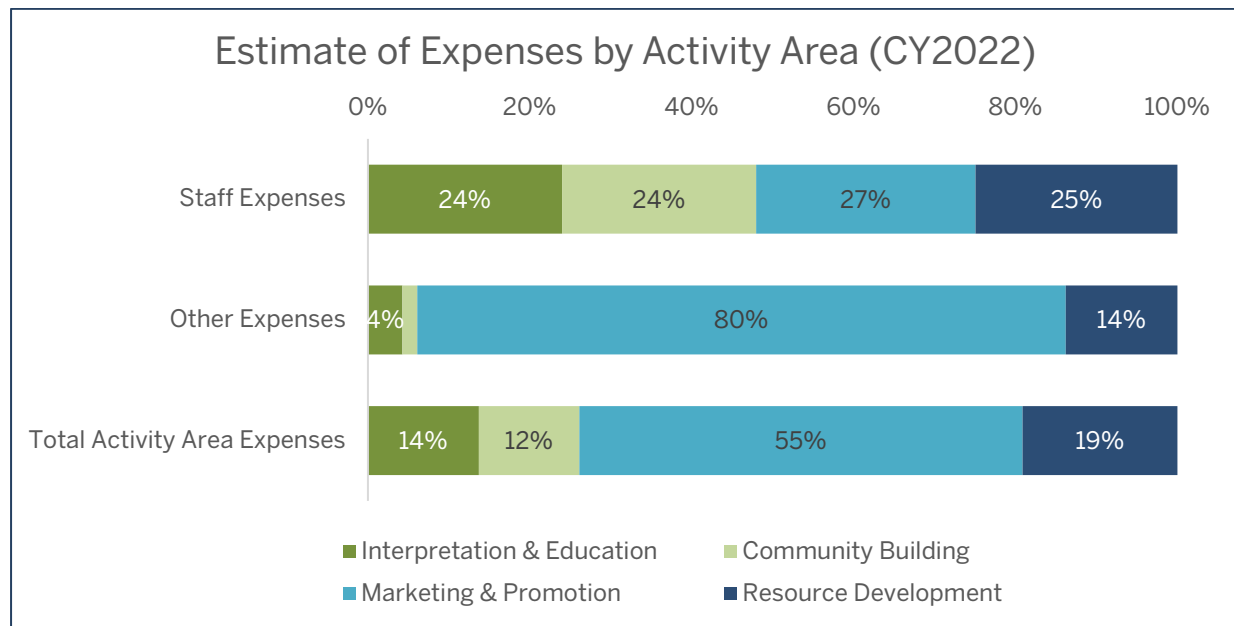


Figure 16: Estimate of Expenses by Logic Model Activity Areas and Expense Category, Calendar Year 2022

Note. Percentage reflects two primary sources and may not be exhaustive of all program spending: (1) Staff expenses (salary, benefits, payroll taxes) deriving from the Administration expenses in CY2022 documentation and then allocated to the six workplan program areas, according to Percentages Used document and (2) Direct expenses to the six workplan program areas listed in CY2022 documentation. Expenses for conservation were excluded due to its exclusion from the logic model. Expenses for program areas of communication & heritage tourism and marketing are combined in the logic model’s “Marketing and Promotion” activity.

4.4 Impact of Investments

This section sought to answer the evaluation’s second question, “What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?”

Based on the prior findings, a combination of investment from federal, state/local, private-individual, foundation & nonprofit, and in-kind sources (Table 12) have resulted in LFL meeting its federal match requirements every year since its designation (Table 15). Given changes in in-kind reporting, the best summary metric for match is likely its recent 5-year match ratio (Table 15), which indicates that for every \$1 of federal NPS-NHA funding, an additional \$1.80 is generated; in dollar equivalency, base NPS-NHA funding of \$1.62 million over this time leveraged \$2.98 million in nonfederal matching funds from 2018-2022.

Direct connections can be made between these investments and LFL's programmatic impact, illustrating the catalytic effect they have across the ALNHA. Investments in LFL have allowed the organization to:

- Realize the activities and strategies in the areas of Interpretation and Education, Community Building, Marketing and Promotion, and Sustainability as outlined in Section 3. In other words, the investments made in the ALNHA have allowed the purposes outlined in the delegating legislation and goals outlined in the management plan to be achieved.
- Serve as a valuable mechanism for pass-through funding. In this way, LFL is a fiscal agent that facilitates funding for small and rural communities, which may not have an entity that can receive and distribute federal grant funding. As a result, while not always directly benefiting LFL financially, they provide an invaluable service to communities across the ALNHA. An example of this was the grant for the Lincoln mural in Jonesboro, funded through the National Park Service's Lower Mississippi Delta Initiative and facilitated by LFL because the local community working group did not qualify as a recipient for federal funding.
- Catalyze their impact through supporting communities and partners by:
 - Reimbursing partial costs of Signature Events and the presence of Abraham Lincoln interpreters across the ALNHA (3.2.1)
 - Providing community building capacity workshops and other services at no cost to attendees and lending legitimacy and visibility to the work of LFL communities, which in one case described via interviews indirectly resulted in a grant for \$50,000 worth of renovations (3.2.2)
 - Promoting the cohort of LFL communities via no- or low-cost marketing and promotion efforts such as the annual Visitor Guide, signage on major roadways, and exposure of LFL communities on its website, social, and other online sources (3.2.3)
- Serve an invaluable role within the geographic region and the "Lincoln landscape," acting as an important hub, connecting institutions (3.2.4)

4.4.1 Economic Impact

In 2017, an economic impact study on the ALNHA was conducted by Tripp Umbach and funded through NPS-NHA Administrative Support funding in partnership with the Heritage Development Partnership. This study examined the support ALNHA provides through its partnerships for heritage tourism, recreation, historic preservation, natural resource preservation, and educational projects. The report found that, on an annual basis, the ALNHA generates \$258.6 million in economic effect (Table 18); it also supports 3,234 jobs and generates \$25.5 million in tax revenue (Tripp Umbach, 2017). This report was based on average annual data from 2014-2016. It evaluated economic effect of business and tourism, jobs supported, and tax revenue generated based on several factors, including number of events, educational and outreach efforts, and external factors such as tax rates and societal events. Visitor and tourism expenditures, calculated based on visitor estimates, are the primary sources of economic benefit quantified in the analysis. This category includes direct visitor expenditures (which are used to pay wages, salaries, and taxes), as well as indirect

ripples through the regional economy. Some intangible benefits that NHAs provide were not able to be quantified and are not part of this value; these include sharing knowledge, facilitating collaborative partnerships, and increasing the quality of life in the region.

Table 18: Overall Economic Impact of ALNHA

Measure	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Induced Effect	Total Effect
Economic Impact	162,098,136	48,709,733	47,766,743	258,574,612
Tourism	161,466,055	48,379,406	47,588,723	257,434,184
Operations	632,081	330,327	178,020	1,140,428

Source: Tripp Umbach (2017). Note: Values are on an annual basis, based on a three-year average.

SECTION 5: SUCCESSES AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN NHA



*Bronze statue of Abraham Lincoln and his family outside at the Old State Capitol, in Springfield, Illinois.
Photo by Kristina Anderson, Eppley Institute.*

5.1 Defining Sustainability

The third and last question guiding the evaluation of the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area asks, “How do the Heritage Area’s management structure, partnership relationships, and current funding contribute to its sustainability?” In response to this question, the Eppley Institute evaluation team applied the definition of sustainability as outlined by the National Park Service (2016):

Sustainability for an NHA is “the coordinating entity’s continuing ability to work with partners through changing circumstances to meet its authorized mission and includes the ability to:

- Honor the legislative mandate,
- Govern and adaptively manage, staff, and operate,
- Leverage and secure resources (time, talent, treasure)/(volunteers, expertise, funds),
- Support partners in communication, collaboration, and capacity building.
- Steward programs and projects to improve economic value and quality of life, and
- Reach diverse audiences.”

5.2 Honoring the Legislative Mandate

Introduced previously in Section 3, the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area’s founding legislation (Public Law 110-229) authorized six purposes:

1. to recognize the significant natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the study titled “Feasibility Study of the Proposed Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area” prepared for the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition in 2002 and revised in 2007;
2. to promote heritage, cultural and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public;
3. to recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key periods in the growth of America, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage;
4. to recognize and interpret the distinctive role the region played in shaping the man who would become the 16th President of the United States, and how Abraham Lincoln’s life left its traces in the stories, folklore, buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes of the region;
5. to provide a cooperative management framework to foster a close working relationship with all levels of government, the private sector, and the local communities in the region in identifying, preserving, interpreting, and developing the historical, cultural, scenic, and natural resources of the region for the educational and inspirational benefit of current and future generations; and
6. to provide appropriate linkages between units of the National Park System and communities, governments, and organizations within the Heritage Area.

As documented throughout this report and in detail in Section 3.3 - Table 10, LFL has evolved as an organization and has made strategic and financial decisions regarding which purpose areas to emphasize. However, it has continued to engage in programs and activities that honor the purposes outlined in the authorizing legislation.

5.3 Management Capacity of the ALNHA

In evaluating the ALNHA’s management capacity, the evaluation team considered the performance of LFL’s Board of Directors and staff, its strategic planning and adaptive management capacity, and monitoring and record keeping practices. These areas were

evaluated using several forms of data, particularly interviews and documentation, supplemented by community input and observation.

5.3.1 Governance, Leadership, and Oversight

Board of Directors

As discussed in Section 2.2.2, the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area is managed by the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Previously a grassroots group based out of Springfield that worked to preserve the Lincoln legacy in the area, it became a registered nonprofit in 2002 and was named the local coordinating entity in 2008. As with all nonprofits, it is led by a volunteer Board of Directors, who are responsible for the organization's oversight and accountability.

An illustration of this reporting relationship is provided in Section 2.2.2 and the membership of the Board (as well as its members' roles and tenure) is outlined in Table 4. Interviews described the Board members as highly competent and committed individuals, who provide—both individually and collectively—legal, programmatic, and financial oversight. Staff were praised in this regard: One Board member complimented the LFL Executive Director for her skill in observation, networking, and building a strong Board of Directors. To that end, due to a mid-year vacancy and other ongoing challenges associated with maintaining a full Board, there are currently three vacant seats. Filling these positions in accordance with the organization's bylaws is a known area of continued attention.

Interviews also illustrated that Board members understand their role of providing sound oversight of the organization, particularly related to fiscal stewardship. While the Board is generally not expected to make financial contributions to the organization due to perceptions of stabilized NPS-NHA funding, they do prioritize financial oversight. In one example mentioned during separate interviews with two Board members, they described a meeting in which the Board provided feedback to staff that they would like to see a revised budget (with more clarity with respect to expenditures) prior to approval. In response, LFL staff quickly and diligently produced the revised budget that provided the sophistication the Board sought. The prior example also illustrates that the Board is not a “rubber stamp” for LFL staff. While they seek to avoid micro-managing, they do understand their crucial role in providing oversight to the organization.

Executive Director and Staff

Four individuals have served as Executive Director of Looking for Lincoln. Nikki Stratton led the organization in its early years until 2009 (just after Public-Law 110-229 established the ALNHA and Looking for Lincoln was designated as the location coordinating entity). Hal Smith (2009-2010) and Kay Smith (2010-2012) served in the role in subsequent years and during the development of the Management Plan.

Sarah Watson was hired in 2012 and has served in the Executive Director position since that time. She holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education and a master's degree in Workforce Development, both from the University of Illinois. In her role as Executive Director, she is ultimately responsible for LFL's programming, finance, and operations. Across multiple interactions and interviews, Sarah was described as an efficient, organized, transparent, and skilled leader. On multiple occasions she was acknowledged for her skill in communicating, networking, and bringing individuals together, especially those of diverse interests and institutions. She was described as having “the personality to do what Heritage Areas are designed to do...making [sound] connections, which takes time and consistency to build credibility [for LFL].” Notably, Sarah's identity with LFL was often described in an eponymous way—when posed with a question about LFL generally, interviewees often responded with reference to Sarah, specifically.

Heather Feezor was hired in 2013 as LFL’s Project Manager; since then, her position title has changed to Program Manager to better reflect her responsibilities for overseeing LFL’s program work, particularly in the activity areas of interpretation, education, and community Building. Heather holds a bachelor’s degree from Hannibal-LaGrange College, a master’s in History from the University of Illinois, as well as a certificate in Nonprofit Management. While her responsibilities are generally related to programming, she also has many responsibilities beyond those intuitive to someone in a Program Manager role. As one example and because of NPS-NHA reporting requirements, Heather leads the annual efforts to track and record match contributions, particularly in-kind volunteer efforts. Along with her colleagues, Heather was complimented for her role in maintaining high programmatic standards and helping the organization to maintain key relationships. Heather’s predecessor in the Program Manager role was Robert Crosby (2009-2013).

Jeanette Carlson first began work on a contract basis with Looking for Lincoln in 2006. She holds a certificate in Federal Grants Management. Early in her tenure with LFL, she served as project manager overseeing the wayside exhibits initiative and then was hired in 2012 as Business Manager. One interviewee suggested that LFL was different than some of its NHA peers in having an individual dedicated to a business operations role, and that LFL was wise to have made this decision. Jeanette oversees work related to financial record keeping, applications, and technology. Like her colleagues, interviewees were highly complementary of her work and contributions to LFL. Prior to Jeanette, Sheila Blodgett served in the Business Manager role for the organization until 2011.

The LFL staff team is supported by contracted work when needed for a particular project, skill, or area of expertise. A contractor with an ongoing, substantial role in LFL’s marketing and outreach efforts in Steven Varble, who completes design work, video editing, social media, marketing strategy, and promotional efforts for LFL. He has supported LFL’s work since 2019.

The LFL team is more than the sum of its individual parts—the strength of the team of three was a regularly occurring theme in the evaluation. Many individuals (partners, Board members, community representatives) thought highly of the “tremendous” LFL team. They were characterized as experts in their work, hard workers, and passionate and collegial collaborators. They are skilled at building and maintaining relationships. They were also described as bringing transparency and humility to their work: “They bring a level of appreciation for the opportunity [to do what they do]. They have been entrusted with a special gift [and they meet it] with good cheer, optimism, and humility.”

Given their performance and accolades, one opportunity for LFL’s growth is formalizing role refinement, career advancement, and transition planning. Given that the current staff is a “well-oiled machine” that has worked together for more than a decade, investing in staff development opportunities, and purposefully planning for prospective changes to the team, may be areas for growth.

5.3.2 Strategy Planning and Adaptive Management

LFL has demonstrated skill in strategic planning and adaptive management since being named as an NHA local coordinating entity. Its Management Plan (2012), Interpretive Plans (2014, 2022), Economic Impact Study (2017) and annual workplans demonstrate the organization’s commitment to long-term planning. LFL staff have also shared plans to engage in new strategic efforts (including a retreat for its Board of Directors) at the conclusion of the evaluation process to plan for LFL’s next stages.

LFL has also demonstrated adaptability in its work, using planning as guideposts rather than rigid constraints. An example of this adaptivity is its response to the COVID-19 global

pandemic. During 2020, the organization shifted many practices (e.g., Board and steering council meetings) and programs to virtual formats. Despite the unplanned shift, many of these outcomes have resulted in high-quality and lasting changes, such as the online LFL Conversations and Stories via formats like Facebook live events and the podcast series. This is just one example of the agility of LFL as an organization; it is agile in ways that some large institutions are not.

In addition, LFL has also responded to social context, such as the nationwide discussion related to diversity, inclusion, and equity that attracted public interest in the summer of 2020. In one interesting community input conversation, an individual shared their perception that some current topics in public discourse, such as white privilege and the Black Lives Matter movement, were important “downstream” issues from slavery and “what Lincoln fought for.” Interviews indicated that the LFL team realized that the organization had historically been operating on a more “myopic” or “older” model of the “Lincoln story.” In response, the LFL team has challenged themselves to tell (a) new and previously neglected stories, some of which highlight “harder truths” and (b) stories that would be more relevant to diverse audiences, i.e., programming related to topics such as the Underground Railroad and New Philadelphia and concepts such as racial and gender identity. Like many nonprofit organizations, as LFL adapts and grows, continued reflection on whether its activities maintain alignment with its original mission and vision, while also adapting to current contexts, is important.

5.3.3 Monitoring and Record Keeping

LFL has demonstrated its ability to maintain records that facilitate oversight by internal and external parties. Financial record keeping is robust; most documentation of this type was organized and readily available to the evaluation team when requested, including all data corresponding in timeframe with the current staff’s tenure at the organization. LFL also has documentation related to NPS reporting and workplans, annual reports targeting more general and community-based audiences, and organizational policies (administrative, financial, human resources). Many sources of data were also quickly able to be substantiated; for example, reporting of Signature Event attendance, volunteers, investments, and in-kind contributions are tracked annually and in a consistent format in one Excel workbook.

As the organization continues to mature, there are two possible areas for growth. Relationship management is important to the organization, and the staff excels in maintaining relationships and communicating with others. With this context, it was observed that some institutional knowledge may not be formally documented: LFL may want to consider structural approaches to data, such as through relational databases, customer relationship management software, et cetera.

Additionally, like many nonprofit organizations, particularly those with limited capacity, LFL generally tracks “outputs” with respect to measuring impact. These outputs include measures such as the number of attendees or participants at an event/program or the amount of funding invested in communities. As the organization considers future growth plans, identifying metrics that would measure “outcomes”—such as greater impacts related to measuring awareness and interest—may be another area for growth.

5.4 Partnerships

LFL excels in its ability to develop and maintain robust and authentic partnerships. As indicated in Section 3.2.4, its ability to sustain ongoing relationships with many institutions (and the individuals that represent them) is particularly strong. It serves a pivotal role as a central hub that coordinates and connects all the institutions that do work related to the life and times of Abraham Lincoln. It also catalyzes impact—many interviewees acknowledged

that their partnership with LFL has strengthened grant applications and other opportunities. Many interviewees indicated that due to LFL’s geographic focus, mission, and funding, there is not another organization or mechanism that could meaningfully accomplish the goals and objectives of the ALNHA if funding were to sunset or be substantially reduced.² This assessment of LFL’s central and irreplaceable role is supported by the evaluation team.

Section 2.2.4 describes the organization’s partnerships, both formal and informal. LFL’s partners include many of the most prominent “players” in the “Lincoln Landscape” as well as smaller institutions whose voices and impacts are augmented by partnership with LFL. LFL is heralded for continuously reaching out to partners for input, ideas, and advice.

LFL is also strategic in deciding when to let another entity lead in an area so that their capacity and focus can be directed elsewhere. An example of this form of strategic partnerships is their work in historic preservation of brick-and-mortar facilities. For example, LFL staff acknowledges that other groups, such as the National Park Service and State of Illinois have the funding, directive, and staff expertise to lead in that area; as a result, historic preservation has not been a priority focus area for LFL. However, they have supported these groups, such as by providing input, resources, or partnership, to help those partners do the work in which they excel.

LFL’s partnership with NPS is also noteworthy. Beyond its relationship with NPS-NHA leadership, which is characterized as strong, LFL is also has the Lincoln Home National Historic Site within its boundaries (LFL’s office space is located within and donated by Lincoln Home). While several NHAs have an NPS unit within their geographic boundary, the ALNHA and Lincoln Home National Historic Site share a common theme and topic of focus: Abraham Lincoln and his life and times while living in Illinois. This partnership is a particularly valuable one, with a representative from that unit recommending that “every heritage area should have a [corresponding] park unit and vice versa.” Multiple instances of mutualism, in which one entity (LFL or NPS) benefited from the capabilities or resources of the other, were documented (Sections 3.2.1, 4.2).

One recurring opportunity for growth with respect to partnerships is that of collaborating with institutions of higher education. Several interviewees recommended that LFL take further advantage of university partnership models, as it does in the LEAD Academy program (Section 3.2.1). In particular, University of Illinois-Springfield is one of few public institutions in the area to have a public history program; this was identified as a prospective partnership. Community input supports this observation: During one session, multiple individuals mentioned that they were in town due to a history event for youth at a local university.

5.5 Financial Sustainability

The third research question also specifies understanding how current funding contributes to the organization’s financial sustainability. Over LFL’s history and particularly after the development of its Management Plan, the organization has demonstrated that it has sufficient funding to cover its expenses annually, as well as a robust endowment that could support special projects or “rainy day” needs (Section 4.2).

In addition, the organization has made strategic decisions (e.g., limiting the size of its salaried staff, augmenting their work with contracted services, pairing some one-time programmatic expenses with other, parallel revenue sources) to ensure that its regular, annual operating expenses are below the annual amount of NPS-NHA funding, should that source experience an unexpected, moderate reduction (Section 4.2). As a result, while most of LFL’s annual match requirements are met by in-kind rather than cash sources (Section 4.2.1), the

² In January 2023 P.L. 117-339 extended funding to the ALNHA through FY2037.

organization has still made decisions that result in the organization being financially sustainable, save a substantial decrease in NPS-NHA funding. This is a fiscal reality that both staff and leadership acknowledge. Accordingly, LFL leadership seeks to maintain a sustainable staff size funded within the bounds of federal NPS-NHA funding, which is perceived to be a more predictable revenue stream. In other words, LFL leadership has chosen not to scale up their staff based on other, less dependable sources of funding (i.e., grants, non-federal sources), as they seek to avoid reducing staff count if those sources of funding were to become unavailable.

Beyond LFL’s consistent ability to manage its budget and meet federal match requirements, its ability to leverage funding and contributions is strong. Table 19, duplicated here from Section 4.2, demonstrates the myriad of funding it has received over the years from many sources beyond NPS-NHA, particularly through in-kind contributions. Since 2019, more than \$3 million has been invested in the ALNHA via federal NPS-NHA funding. This has been matched by more than \$2.8 million in non-NPS-NHA cash funding and more than \$15 million in in-kind investments.

Findings outlined in section 4.2.1 further illustrated that, over the past five years, for every \$1 invested by Congress via its NPS-NHA funding, LFL met it with \$1.8 of other investments. As a result, NPS-NHA funding has indeed served as a catalyst to impact in the ALNHA; without this funding, it is easy to assume that many of the interpretation, education, community building, and sustainability activities documented in Section 3 would not have been achieved by either LFL, its designated communities, or partners. In this way, LFL contributes to the financial sustainability of the area by enhancing the public and visitor experience in its role as a central hub.

Table 19: Direct Investments (in Dollars)

Year (FY)	A: NPS-NHA Awarded	B: NPS-NHA Expended	C: Other NPS	D: Other Federal	E: State & Local	F: Private & Individual	G: Foundation & Nonprofit	H: In-Kind	I: Total Investment
2009	148,000 ¹	148,000 ¹	-	399,000	152,000	-	300,000	-	999,000
2010	150,000	150,000	9,000	-	192,780	-	-	3,189,639	3,541,419
2011	147,000	140,000		-	200,000	-	-	365,625	705,625
2012	147,000	147,000	28,246	-	291,022	-	48,000	3,406,887	3,921,155
2013	150,000	150,000	-	-	150,000	-	-	3,008,039	3,308,039
2014	300,000	300,000	-	-	301,000	-	78,500	332,724	1,012,224
2015	300,000	300,000		-	66,683	-	76,465 ³	516,496	959,644
2016	300,000	300,000	-	60,999	-	-	20,000	758,366	1,139,366
2017	300,000	300,000	115,099	-	-	77	21,150	643,530	1,079,857
2018	327,720	327,720	-	-	-	551	3,000	1,199,033	1,530,304
2019	332,097	332,097	54,600	-	36,425	6,324	57,000	717,956	1,204,401
2020	336,388	336,388	55,000	-	20,327	3,026	15,000	299,360	729,101
2021	400,000	236,369	5,700	-	4,200	795	15,000	216,374	478,438
2022	500,000	390,008	-	5,000	-	1,911	15,000	373,097	785,016
Total	3,838,205	3,557,582	267,646	464,999	1,414,436	12,684	649,115	15,027,127	21,393,588

Note. Table above is duplicated here from Table 12, Section 4.2.

5.6 Sustainability Summary

The Eppley Institute evaluation team has found that LFL, though the documented findings regarding the organizations' management structure, partner relationships, and current funding model, has the elements needed to maintain its reputation and documented status as a strong NHA local coordinating entity. Its Board of Directors functions well both in its formal fiscal responsibilities but also in its oversight of and collaboration with LFL staff, who are highly competent, adaptive, and passionate. LFL has also developed a network of partners and communities characterized by quality work and trust. LFL has collaborated with and supported many of these partners and communities for many years, which contributes to the organization's programmatic sustainability. Federal NPS-NHA funding provides a dependable source of investment; meanwhile, LFL has leveraged both (a) other sources of funding to support individual projects and (b) in-kind contributions to achieve its mission and meet the expectations of its founding legislation.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Designating Legislation

Subtitle C—Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area

SEC. 441. PURPOSES.

The purposes of this subtitle include—

- (1) to recognize the significant natural and cultural legacies of the area, as demonstrated in the study entitled “Feasibility Study of the Proposed Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area” prepared for the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition in 2002 and revised in 2007;
- (2) to promote heritage, cultural and recreational tourism and to develop educational and cultural programs for visitors and the general public;
- (3) to recognize and interpret important events and geographic locations representing key periods in the growth of America, including Native American, Colonial American, European American, and African American heritage;
- (4) to recognize and interpret the distinctive role the region played in shaping the man who would become the 16th President of the United States, and how Abraham Lincoln’s life left its traces in the stories, folklore, buildings, streetscapes, and landscapes of the region;
- (5) to provide a cooperative management framework to foster a close working relationship with all levels of government, the private sector, and the local communities in the region in identifying, preserving, interpreting, and developing the historical, cultural, scenic, and natural resources of the region for the educational and inspirational benefit of current and future generations; and
- (6) to provide appropriate linkages between units of the National Park System and communities, governments, and organizations within the Heritage Area.

SEC. 442. DEFINITIONS.

In this subtitle:

- (1) LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.—The term “local coordinating entity” means the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, which is hereby designated by Congress—
 - (A) to develop, in partnership with others, the management plan for the National Heritage Area; and
 - (B) to act as a catalyst for the implementation of projects and programs among diverse partners in the National Heritage Area.
- (2) MANAGEMENT PLAN.—The term “management plan” means the plan prepared by the local coordinating entity for the National Heritage Area that specifies actions, policies, strategies, performance goals, and recommendations to meet the goals of the National Heritage Area, in accordance with this subtitle.
- (3) NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.—The term “National Heritage Area” means the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area established in this subtitle.
- (4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 443. DESIGNATION OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area.

(b) BOUNDARIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The National Heritage Area shall consist of sites as designated by the management plan within a core area located in Central Illinois, consisting of Adams, Brown, Calhoun, Cass, Champaign, Christian, Clark, Coles, Cumberland, Dewitt, Douglas, Edgar, Fayette, Fulton, Greene, Hancock, Henderson, Jersey, Knox, LaSalle, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Madison, Mason, McDonough, McLean, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Moultrie, Peoria, Piatt, Pike, Sangamon, Schuyler, Scott, Shelby, Tazewell, Vermillion, Warren and Woodford counties.

(2) MAP.—The boundaries of the National Heritage Area shall be as generally depicted on the map titled “Proposed Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area”, and numbered 338/80,000, and dated July 2007. The map shall be on file and available to the public in the appropriate offices of the National Park Service and the local coordinating entity.

SEC. 444. MANAGEMENT PLAN.

(a) REQUIREMENTS.—The management plan for the National Heritage Area shall—

(1) describe comprehensive policies, goals, strategies, and recommendations for telling the story of the heritage of the area covered by the National Heritage Area and encouraging long-term resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development of the National Heritage Area;

(2) include a description of actions and commitments that Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, private organizations, and citizens will take to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area;

(3) specify existing and potential sources of funding or economic development strategies to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the National Heritage Area;

(4) include an inventory of the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area related to the national importance and themes of the National Heritage Area that should be protected, enhanced, interpreted, managed, funded, and developed;

(5) recommend policies and strategies for resource management, including the development of intergovernmental and interagency agreements to protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area;

(6) describe a program for implementation for the management plan, including—

(A) performance goals;

(B) plans for resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development; and

(C) specific commitments for implementation that have been made by the local coordinating entity or any Federal, State, Tribal, or local government agency, organization, business, or individual;

(7) include an analysis of, and recommendations for, means by which Federal, State, Tribal, and local programs may best be coordinated (including the role of the National Park Service and other Federal agencies associated with the National Heritage Area) to further the purposes of this subtitle; and

(8) include a business plan that—

(A) describes the role, operation, financing, and functions of the local coordinating entity and of each of the major activities contained in the management plan; and

(B) provides adequate assurances that the local coordinating entity has the partnerships and financial and other resources necessary to implement the management plan for the National Heritage Area.

(b) DEADLINE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after the date on which funds are first made available to develop the management plan after designation as a National Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity shall submit the management plan to the Secretary for approval.

(2) TERMINATION OF FUNDING.—If the management plan is not submitted to the Secretary in accordance with paragraph (1), the local coordinating entity shall not qualify for any additional financial assistance under this subtitle until such time as the management plan is submitted to and approved by the Secretary.

(c) APPROVAL OF MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(1) REVIEW.—Not later than 180 days after receiving the plan, the Secretary shall review and approve or disapprove the management plan for a National Heritage Area on the basis of the criteria established under paragraph (3).

(2) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary shall consult with the Governor of each State in which the National Heritage Area is located before approving a management plan for the National Heritage Area.

(3) CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL.—In determining whether to approve a management plan for a National Heritage Area, the Secretary shall consider whether—

(A) the local coordinating entity represents the diverse interests of the National Heritage Area, including Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, natural, and historic resource protection organizations, educational institutions, businesses, recreational organizations, community residents, and private property owners;

(B) the local coordinating entity—

(i) has afforded adequate opportunity for public and Federal, State, Tribal, and local governmental involvement (including through workshops and hearings) in the preparation of the management plan; and

(ii) provides for at least semiannual public meetings to ensure adequate implementation of the management plan;

(C) the resource protection, enhancement, interpretation, funding, management, and development strategies described in the management

plan, if implemented, would adequately protect, enhance, interpret, fund, manage, and develop the natural, historic, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resources of the National Heritage Area;

(D) the management plan would not adversely affect any activities authorized on Federal land under public land laws or land use plans;

(E) the local coordinating entity has demonstrated the financial capability, in partnership with others, to carry out the plan;

(F) the Secretary has received adequate assurances from the appropriate State, Tribal, and local officials whose support is needed to ensure the effective implementation of the State, Tribal, and local elements of the management plan; and

(G) the management plan demonstrates partnerships among the local coordinating entity, Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments, regional planning organizations, nonprofit organizations, or private sector parties for implementation of the management plan.

(4) DISAPPROVAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If the Secretary disapproves the management plan, the Secretary—

(i) shall advise the local coordinating entity in writing of the reasons for the disapproval; and

(ii) may make recommendations to the local coordinating entity for revisions to the management plan.

(B) DEADLINE.—Not later than 180 days after receiving a revised management plan, the Secretary shall approve or disapprove the revised management plan.

(5) AMENDMENTS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—An amendment to the management plan that substantially alters the purposes of the National Heritage Area shall be reviewed by the Secretary and approved or disapproved in the same manner as the original management plan.

(B) IMPLEMENTATION.—The local coordinating entity shall not use Federal funds authorized by this subtitle to implement an amendment to the management plan until the Secretary approves the amendment.

(6) AUTHORITIES.—The Secretary may—

(A) provide technical assistance under the authority of this subtitle for the development and implementation of the management plan; and

(B) enter into cooperative agreements with interested parties to carry out this subtitle.

SEC. 445. EVALUATION; REPORT.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years before the date on which authority for Federal funding terminates for the National Heritage Area under this subtitle, the Secretary shall—

- (1) conduct an evaluation of the accomplishments of the National Heritage Area; and
- (2) prepare a report in accordance with subsection (c).

(b) EVALUATION.—An evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1) shall—

- (1) assess the progress of the local coordinating entity with respect to—
 - (A) accomplishing the purposes of the authorizing legislation for the National Heritage Area; and
 - (B) achieving the goals and objectives of the approved management plan for the National Heritage Area;
- (2) analyze the Federal, State, Tribal, and local, and private investments in the National Heritage Area to determine the impact of the investments; and
- (3) review the management structure, partnership relationships, and funding of the National Heritage Area for purposes of identifying the critical components for sustainability of the National Heritage Area.

(c) REPORT.—Based on the evaluation conducted under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary shall submit a report to the Committee on Natural Resources of the United States House of Representatives and the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the United States Senate. The report shall include recommendations for the future role of the National Park Service, if any, with respect to the National Heritage Area.

SEC. 446. LOCAL COORDINATING ENTITY.

(a) DUTIES.—To further the purposes of the National Heritage Area, the Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition, as the local coordinating entity, shall—

- (1) prepare a management plan for the National Heritage Area, and submit the management plan to the Secretary, in accordance with this subtitle;
- (2) submit an annual report to the secretary for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this subtitle, specifying—
 - (A) the specific performance goals and accomplishments of the local coordinating entity;
 - (B) the expenses and income of the local coordinating entity;
 - (C) the amounts and sources of matching funds;
 - (D) the amounts leveraged with Federal funds and sources of the leveraging;and
 - (E) grants made to any other entities during the fiscal year;
- (3) make available for audit for each fiscal year for which the local coordinating entity receives Federal funds under this subtitle, all information pertaining to the expenditure of the funds and any matching funds; and
- (4) encourage economic viability and sustainability that is consistent with the purposes of the National Heritage Area.

(b) **AUTHORITIES.**—For the purposes of preparing and implementing the approved management plan for the National Heritage Area, the local coordinating entity may use Federal funds made available under this subtitle to—

- (1) make grants to political jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, and other parties within the National Heritage Area;
- (2) enter into cooperative agreements with or provide technical assistance to political jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, Federal agencies, and other interested parties;
- (3) hire and compensate staff, including individuals with expertise in—
 - (A) natural, historical, cultural, educational, scenic, and recreational resource conservation;
 - (B) economic and community development; and
 - (C) heritage planning;
- (4) obtain funds or services from any source, including other Federal programs;
- (5) contract for goods or services; and
- (6) support activities of partners and any other activities that further the purposes of the National Heritage Area and are consistent with the approved management plan.

(c) **PROHIBITION ON ACQUISITION OF REAL PROPERTY.**—The local coordinating entity may not use Federal funds authorized under this subtitle to acquire any interest in real property.

SEC. 447. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Nothing in this subtitle affects the authority of a Federal agency to provide technical or financial assistance under any other law.

(b) **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION.**—The head of any Federal agency planning to conduct activities that may have an impact on a National Heritage Area is encouraged to consult and coordinate the activities with the Secretary and the local coordinating entity to the maximum extent practicable.

(c) **OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES.**—Nothing in this subtitle—

- (1) modifies, alters, or amends any law or regulation authorizing a Federal agency to manage Federal land under the jurisdiction of the Federal agency;
- (2) limits the discretion of a Federal land manager to implement an approved land use plan within the boundaries of a National Heritage Area; or
- (3) modifies, alters, or amends any authorized use of Federal land under the jurisdiction of a Federal agency.

SEC. 448. PRIVATE PROPERTY AND REGULATORY PROTECTIONS.

Nothing in this subtitle—

(1) abridges the rights of any property owner (whether public or private), including the right to refrain from participating in any plan, project, program, or activity conducted within the National Heritage Area;

(2) requires any property owner to permit public access (including access by Federal, State, Tribal, or local agencies) to the property of the property owner, or to modify public access or use of property of the property owner under any other Federal, State, Tribal, or local law;

(3) alters any duly adopted land use regulation, approved land use plan, or other regulatory authority of any Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency, or conveys any land use or other regulatory authority to any local coordinating entity, including but not necessarily limited to development and management of energy, water, or water-related infrastructure;

(4) authorizes or implies the reservation or appropriation of water or water rights;

(5) diminishes the authority of the State to manage fish and wildlife, including the regulation of fishing and hunting within the National Heritage Area; or

(6) creates any liability, or affects any liability under any other law, of any private property owner with respect to any person injured on the private property.

SEC. 449. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Subject to subsection (b), there are authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subtitle not more than \$1,000,000 for any fiscal year. Funds so appropriated shall remain available until expended.

(b) LIMITATION ON TOTAL AMOUNTS APPROPRIATED.—Not more than \$15,000,000 may be appropriated to carry out this subtitle.

(c) COST-SHARING REQUIREMENT.—The Federal share of the total cost of any activity under this subtitle shall be not more than 50 percent; the non-Federal contribution may be in the form of in-kind contributions of goods or services fairly valued.

SEC. 450. USE OF FEDERAL FUNDS FROM OTHER SOURCES.

Nothing in this subtitle shall preclude the local coordinating entity from using Federal funds available under other laws for the purposes for which those funds were authorized.

SEC. 451. SUNSET FOR GRANTS AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.

The authority of the Secretary to provide financial assistance under this subtitle terminates on the date that is 15 years after the date of the enactment of this subtitle.

Appendix B – Boundary Expansion Legislation

P.L. 116-9, SEC. 6002. Adjustment of boundaries of Lincoln National Heritage Area

(a) BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT.—Section 443(b)(1) of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 (Public Law 1120-229; 122 Stat. 819) is amended—

(1) by inserting “, Livingston,” after “LaSalle”; and

(2) by inserting “, the city of Jonesboro in Union County, and the city of Freeport in Stephenson county” after “Woodford counties”.

(b) MAP.—The secretary shall update the map referred to in section 443(b)(2) of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008 to reflect the boundary adjustment made by the amendments in subsection (a).

Appendix C – FY2022 List of Partners

Formal Partners

- Abraham Lincoln Association (Nonprofit)
- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (State Government)
- Abe Lincoln Project of Pike County (Nonprofit)
- Atlanta Looking for Lincoln Working Group (Atlanta Library & Museum and Atlanta Betterment Fund) (LFL Community Working Group)
- Beardstown Looking for Lincoln Working Group (Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum) (Nonprofit)
- Champaign County Working Group (LFL Community Working Group)
- Coles County Working Group (LFL Community Working Group)
- Community of Pontiac (LFL Community Working Group)
- Decatur & Macon County LFL Coalition (Local Government)
- Edgar County Looking for Lincoln Working Group (LFL Community Working Group)
- Freeport Looking for Lincoln Group (LFL Community Working Group)
- Gin Ridge Music (Chris Vallillo) (Private Business)
- Great Rivers and Routes Tourism Office (Local Government)
- Greater Freeport Partnership (Nonprofit)
- Hancock County Looking for Lincoln Working Group (LFL Community Working Group)
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (State Government)
- Illinois Department of Natural Resources (State Government)
- Jacksonville Looking for Lincoln Community Working Group (LFL Community Working Group)
- Jonesboro Looking for Lincoln Committee (LFL Community Working Group)
- LaSalle County Working Group (LFL Community Working Group)
- Lincoln Heritage Committee of DeWitt County (Nonprofit)
- Lincoln Heritage Museum (Nonprofit)
- Lincoln Home National Historic Site (Federal Government)
- Macomb CVB (Local Government)
- McLean County LFL Working Group (Lincoln's Festival in Bloomington Committee) (LFL Community Working Group)
- Mt. Pulaski Looking for Lincoln Working Group (Mt. Pulaski Courthouse Foundation) (LFL Community Working Group)
- Macomb Convention & Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- National Park Service (Federal Government)
- Quincy LFL Working Group (Quincy's Lincoln Legacy) (LFL Community Working Group)
- Shelby County Working Group (LFL Community Working Group)
- Southern Illinois University Press (Education)
- Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- Union Pacific Railroad (Business)
- Vandalia Lincoln Heritage Committee (LFL Community Working Group)
- Vermilion County Looking for Lincoln Working Group (LFL Community Working Group)

Informal Partners

- 4H University of Illinois Extension (Education)
- Abraham Lincoln Tourism Bureau of Logan County. (Local Government)
- Bloomington-Normal Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- Bryant Cottage State Historic Site (State Government)
- Canal Corridor Association/Illinois & Michigan Canal National Heritage Area (Nonprofit)
- Center for Lincoln Studies at the University of Illinois Springfield (Education)
- Champaign County Forest Preserve District (Local Government)
- Champaign County Historical Museum (Nonprofit)
- Champaign County Convention & Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- Champaign Public Library (Local Government)
- Charleston City Hall (Local Government)
- Charleston Tourism Office (Local Government)
- C.H. Moore Homestead and DeWitt County Museum (Nonprofit)
- Christian County Courthouse (Local Government)
- Christian County Historical Society (Nonprofit)
- Clinton Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism Bureau (Other)
- Dana Thomas House State Historic Site (State Government)
- Danville Area Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- David Davis Mansion State Historic Site (State Government)
- David Davis Mansion Foundation (Nonprofit)
- Decatur Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- Edwards Place (Nonprofit)
- Elijah Iles Home (Nonprofit)
- Executive Mansion (State Government)
- First Presbyterian Church, Springfield (Nonprofit)
- Friends of Lincoln Trail Homestead State Park and Memorial (Nonprofit)
- Frontiers International (Nonprofit)
- Galesburg Tourism and Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- Great River Road (IL Regional Tourism Office) (Local Government)
- Great Western Railroad Depot (Private Business)
- Hayner Genealogy and Local History Library (Local Government)
- Heritage Corridor CVB (Local Government)
- Historical Society of Quincy & Adams County (John Wood Mansion & The History Museum) (Nonprofit)
- Illinois College (Education)
- Illinois Department of Agriculture (State Government)
- Illinois Route 66 Byway (Nonprofit)
- Illinois South Tourism (Nonprofit)
- Illinois State Historical Society (Nonprofit)
- Illinois Supreme Court Historic Preservation Museum (Nonprofit)
- Historic Nauvoo (Nonprofit)
- Jacksonville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- Joseph Smith Historic Site & Visitor Center (Nonprofit)
- Kenosha Civil War Museum (Nonprofit)
- Kibbe Hancock Heritage Museum (Nonprofit)
- Landmarks Illinois (Nonprofit)
- Lewistown Community Working Group (Local Working Group)
- Lincoln Tomb State Historic Site (State Government)
- Lincoln-Douglas Debate Interpretive Center (Nonprofit)
- Lincoln-Douglas Debate Museum (Local Government)
- Lincoln Log Cabin Foundation (Nonprofit)

- Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site (State Government)
- Lincoln's New Salem State Historic Site (State Government)
- Logan County Tourism Bureau (Local Government)
- Macon County History Museum (Nonprofit)
- Mattoon Tourism and Arts Department (Local Government)
- McLean County Museum of History (Nonprofit)
- Mt. Pulaski Courthouse Foundation (Nonprofit)
- New Philadelphia Association (Nonprofit)
- Niemann Foods (Private Business)
- Old Lincoln Courtroom & Museum (Nonprofit)
- Old State Capitol State Historic Site (State Government)
- Ottawa Visitor Center (Local Government)
- Paris Carnegie Public Library (Local Government)
- Pleasant Plains LFL Working Group (Pleasant Plains Historic Society) (LFL Community Working Group)
- Pontiac Tourism (Local Government)
- Postville Courthouse State Historic Site (State Government)
- Quincy Area Convention & Visitors Bureau. (Local Government)
- Sangamon Experience, University of Illinois Springfield (Education)
- Shelby County Tourism and Visitors Bureau (Local Government)
- Southern Illinois University (Education)
- Springfield Theater Center (Nonprofit)
- Union Pacific Railroad Museum (Nonprofit)
- US Army Corps of Engineers Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center (Federal Government)
- Vandalia State Historic Site (State Government)
- Vermillion County Museum (Nonprofit)
- Williamsville Committee for Historical Legacy (Nonprofit)
- William Watson Hotel (Private Business)

Appendix D – Evaluation Methodology

This Appendix provides further detail regarding the evaluation methods described in Section 1.4.

Community Input Prompts

The following items were prepared to facilitate community input conversations; however, based on the time available, context, and setting, not all members of the public who were engaged by the Evaluation Team were asked all items that follow.

Characteristics

[Resident Status] Where are you from?

- Local resident
- State resident
- Out of state: _____
- Other: _____

[Repeat Visitor Status] Have you been here before?

- First time visitor
- Repeat visitor

Reasons for Visiting

What inspired you to visit/attend this site/event? Are you interested in the life and times of Abraham Lincoln?

How would you summarize any key takeaways from this event/site? What do you think will stick with you after today?

Awareness of Heritage Areas

What, if anything, makes you feel connected to the life and times of Abraham Lincoln?

What Abraham Lincoln sites, events, or locations have you visited? What(were) was that?

Do you recall seeing any Abraham Lincoln signage or marketing promoting an event or location?

Beyond your visit/event today, how have you learned about Abraham Lincoln (if relevant?)

What do you know about the Abraham Lincoln NHA? What kind of work does it do? What kind of impact does it have in the community - economic, cultural, historic, restoration?

Familiarity with Heritage Areas

How did you learn about this event?

Are you aware of a region called the Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area? Does Abraham Lincoln NHA ring a bell?

[Logo prompt] Have you seen this logo before or heard of Looking for Lincoln before? In what context?

Data Domain Matrix
 Evaluation Question 1

Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?	NHA Mgmt. Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Docs	Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other	Financial Data Forms
Heritage Programming, Interpretation and Education – Activities and programs that foster public support and appreciation for the NHA site and tell the story of its natural, historic, and cultural significance to our nation						
Describe Nature of NHA activities						
Description of programming, interpretation, and education activities	X	X		X	X	
Describe Implementation of each activity						
Role of the NHA coordinating entity	X	X		X	X	
Role of NHA administrative staff	X	X		X	X	
Role of the partnership network	X	X		X	X	
Role of the local community	X	X	X	X	X	
Assess Impact of activities						
Engagement of residents and visitors (# served/involved/affected)	X	X	X	X		
Increased understanding, awareness, and appreciation of NHA resources & stories		X	X			
Increased recognition of shared heritage of region	X	X	X	X	X	X
Greater amount and diversity in sources of funding committed to interpretive and educational programming	X					X
Economic Impact / Job Creation	X					
Preservation and Resource Stewardship– Activities that support long-term preservation, conservation, and reclamation of natural, cultural, and historic resources; includes implementing environmental conservation efforts						
Describe Nature of NHA activities						
Description of preservation and resource stewardship activities	X	X				
Description of conservation efforts related to folklore, folk life, life ways, and traditions	X	X		X	X	
Describe Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity (e.g., administration of grants; provision of TA)	X	X		X	X	
Role of NHA administrative staff	X	X		X	X	

Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?	NHA Mgmt. Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Docs	Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other	Financial Data Forms
Role of the partnership network	X	X		X	X	
Role of the local community	X	X	X	X	X	
Assess Impact of activities						
Environmental, cultural, and historic resources conservation	X	X	X	X	X	
Artifact or building restoration	X	X	X	X	X	
Greater amount and diversity in sources of funding committed to conservation and stewardship	X	X		X		X
Increased local sense of pride and connection to place		X	X		X	
Increased capacity of partners	X	X				
Growth in partner network	X	X		X		
Community revitalization	X	X	X		X	
Economic Impact / Job creation	X		X			
Development and Infrastructure – Heritage-based development activities that further provide educational and inspirational opportunities for current and future generations						
Describe Nature of NHA activities						
Description of physical improvement and development activities	X	X		X	X	X
Describe Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity (e.g., administration of grants; provision of TA)	X	X		X	X	
Role of NHA administrative staff	X	X		X	X	
Role of the partnership network	X	X		X	X	
Role of the local community	X	X	X	X	X	
Assess Impact of activities						
Development/construction that is successful in meeting objectives	X	X	X	X	X	
Increased local sense of pride and connection to place		X	X			
Heightened visibility of NHA resources and stories		X	X			
Economic Impact / Job creation	X					
Marketing and Public Outreach – Activities that increase public use and awareness of the NHA and further its economic sustainability						
Describe Nature of NHA activities						

Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?	NHA Mgmt. Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Docs	Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other	Financial Data Forms
Description of marketing and public outreach activities (e.g., promotional materials, events programming)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Describe Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity (e.g., creation of marketing plans)	X	X		X	X	
Role of NHA administrative staff	X	X		X	X	
Role of the partnership network	X	X		X	X	
Role of the local community	X	X	X	X	X	
Assess Impact of activities						
Engagement of residents and visitors (# served/involved/affected)	X	X	X		X	
Increased understanding, awareness, and appreciation of NHA resources and stories	X	X	X	X		X
Increased recognition of shared heritage of region	X	X	X			
Greater amount and diversity in sources of funding	X	X				X
Growth and development of partner network	X	X	X			
Heightened visibility of NHA resources and stories		X	X			
Economic Impact / Job creation	X					
Planning and Technical Assistance – Activities that build local community capacity and assist individuals, organizations and communities who are involved in NHA interpretation, education, preservation and development activities						
Describe Nature of NHA activities						
Description of planning and technical assistance activities (e.g., leading conferences and workshops; technical assistance to local organizations; targeted financial assistance, catalyst, facilitation, convening, negotiating)	X	X		X	X	X
Describe Implementation of each activity						
Role of the coordinating entity (e.g., coordinating, planning)	X	X		X	X	
Role of NHA administrative staff	X	X		X	X	
Role of the partnership network	X	X		X	X	
Role of the local community	X	X	X	X	X	
Assess Impact of activities						

Based on its authorizing legislation and general management plan, has the Heritage Area achieved its proposed accomplishments?	NHA Mgmt. Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Docs	Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other	Financial Data Forms
Increased capacity of partners	X	X				
Growth and development of partner network	X	X				
Trust and support among partners	X	X				
Heightened credibility of NHA	X	X	X			
Economic impact / Job creation	X					

Evaluation Question 2

What have been the impacts of investments made by Federal, State, Tribal and local government and private entities?	NHA Mgmt. Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Docs	Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other	Financial Data Forms
Describe Financial investments:						
Amount of NPS NHA Federal funding over time	X			X		X
Amount of other Federal funding over time	X			X		X
Amount and sources of other funds over time	X			X		X
In-Kind Match support over time	X			X		X
Nature/amount in grants sought and grants awarded over time	X			X		X
Amount/diversity of donor contributions over time	X					X
Assess Impact of financial investments						
Amount of dollars committed to each NHA activity (Interpretation & education, Preservation, Development, Technical assistance and Marketing) over time	X					X
Revenue generated from NHA program activities – educational and recreational	X					X
Consistency of donor support	X					X
Expansion of base of donors over time	X			X	X	X
Economic impact / Job creation	X					X
Describe other types of investment						
Partnership contributions (e.g., time, staff, resources)	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community contributions (e.g., volunteerism)	X	X	X			X
Other in-kind donations	X	X	X			X
Assess impact of other investment sources						
Educational impacts	X	X	X	X		
Marketing and promotional	X	X		X		
Staff enhancement and retention	X	X		X		X
Economic impact / Job creation	X					X

Evaluation Question 3

How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Mgmt. Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Docs	Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other	Financial Data Forms
Describe nature of management structure						
Description of management structure	X			X	X	
Description of NHA mission and vision	X	X	X	X	X	
Description of NHA goals	X	X		X	X	
Description of staffing and volunteers	X	X		X	X	X
Description of governance & role in organization	X			X	X	
Description of executive leadership & role in organization	X			X	X	
Assess coordinating entity's contribution to sustainability						
Diversity of skills and expertise	X	X		X		
Capacity for adaptive management over time (incl. changes in staffing levels, strategic planning, etc.)	X			X		X
Investments in developing staff and career advancement opportunities	X	X		X		X
Clear NHA goals with well-defined timeframes	X			X		
System for setting annual goals or for establishing budgets	X	X		X		
Systematic process for collecting data on measurable goals and usage of data (monitoring and evaluation)	X			X		
Established fundraising plan (immediate and long-term, sustainable impacts)	X	X		X		
Established system of financial accountability	X	X	X	X		
Transparency of systems for setting goals, establishing budgets and financial accountability (a public or private process)	X	X		X		
Stakeholder development plan (sustainable impacts)	X	X				
Growth and development of partner network	X	X		X		
Transparent and effective communication channels with governance, staff, volunteers, partners, etc.	X	X	X	X		
Established and consistent communication mechanisms with partners, members, and local residents	X	X	X	X	X	

How do the NHA management structure, partnership relationships and current funding contribute to its sustainability?	NHA Mgmt. Interviews	Partner Network Interviews	Community Input	Plans, Legal Docs	Guides, Brochures, Web Sites, Other	Financial Data Forms
Coordinating entity has leadership role in partner network	X	X				
Describe nature of partner network						
List of partners	X			X	X	
Purpose of each partnership	X	X		X		
Partners' involvement with NHA	X	X		X		
Assess partner network's contribution to sustainability						
Broad base of partners representing diverse interests and expertise in the NHA	X	X		X	X	
Partner collaboration and combination of investments to accomplish NHA objectives	X	X		X	X	
Number and retention of partners over time	X			X		
Partners' role(s) on NHA Boards	X	X				
Trust and support among partners	X	X				
Assess financial sustainability						
Amount of dollars committed to each NHA activity over time	X	X		X		X
Allocation of Federal funds over time	X			X		X
Sources and amount of leveraged funds over time and sources and amount on matching funds over time	X	X		X		X
Activities that can continue post-sunset of Federal dollars	X					
Assess economic impact on sustainability						
Resource stewardship resulting in improved economic value of NHA	X	X				X
Improved earned income over time	X	X				X
Trends in return on fundraising investment	X					X
Trends in contribution and grants ratio – indicates dependence on voluntary support	X					X
Trends in average annual operating revenue	X					X
Economic Impact / Job creation	X					

Appendix E – Calculation of In-Kind Investments

Table 20 demonstrates that the reporting of in-kind investments varied both in reporting formation and location (e.g., Annual Report Part I, Annual Report Part II), largely due to changes in NPS reporting requirements. The four phases of reporting formats are illustrated by shading (2010-2012, 2013-2014, 2015-2018, and 2020-2022). Given these changes, the maximum value of in-kind/volunteerism was reported and input into Table 12, Column H. Additionally, the ability to compare in-kind values from other sources (such as 990 reports) differ, due to the differing fiscal year as well as differing protocols for measuring in-kind donations.

Table 20: Calculation of In-Kind Investments (in Dollars)

Year (FY)	A: Part I In-Kind (NPS Annual Report)	B: Part II Volunteerism (NPS Annual Report)	C: Part II Volunteerism (NPS Annual Report)	D: Maximum In-Kind (\$)
2010			3,189,639	3,189,639
2011			365,625	\$ 365,625
2012			3,406,887	3,406,887
2013	-	3,008,039		3,008,039
2014	-	332,724		332,724
2015	516,496			516,496
2016	758,366			758,366
2017	643,530			643,530
2018	1,199,033			1,199,033
2019	717,956			717,956
2020	299,360			299,360
2021	216,374			216,374
2022	373,097			373,097

REFERENCES

- Bell, J. Masaoka, J., & Zimmerman, S. (2010). *Nonprofit sustainability: Making strategic decisions for financial viability*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 2 (163-194), 105.
- History.com Editors (2023). *Illinois*. <https://www.history.com/topics/us-states/illinois>
- Esarey, D. (2004). *Illinois as a French colony*. Indiana Periodicals Online, Northern Illinois University Libraries. <https://www.lib.niu.edu/2004/ih1110409.html>
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. (October 2022). *Report to the Restore Illinois Collaborative Commission*. <https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/aboutdceo/reportsrequiredbystate/ricc-october-2022.pdf>
- Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. (December 21, 2022). *Illinois celebrates 2022 economic development milestones*. <https://dceo.illinois.gov/news/press-release.25821.html>
- Illinois Department of Public Health. (2023). *Illinois Population Data*. <https://dph.illinois.gov/data-statistics/vital-statistics/illinois-population-data.html>
- Illinois Secretary of State (2021). *Chronology of Illinois History*. Illinois Blue Book, https://www.ilsos.gov/publications/illinois_bluebook/chronology.pdf.
- Illinois State Museum (n.d.). *French settlement in the Illinois country*. https://www.museum.state.il.us/RiverWeb/landings/Ambot/Archives/vignettes/people/French_20Settlement.html.
- Independent Sector. (2021). *Value of volunteer time*. <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>
- Lincoln Heritage Museum (2023). <https://museum.lincolncollege.edu>
- Lincoln Log Cabin State Historic Site. (2023). <https://www.lincolnlogcabin.org>
- Lincoln's New Salem. (n.d.). <https://www.lincolnsnewsalem.com>
- Lincoln Presidential Foundation. (2023). *About Us*. <https://www.lincolnpresidential.org/about-us/>
- Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition [LFL]. (August 2012). *Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area management plan*. <https://www.lookingforlincoln.org/about>
- Looking for Lincoln Heritage Coalition [LFL]. (2023). *About*. <https://www.lookingforlincoln.org/about>
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2015). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Moody's Analytics. (February 2022). *State of Illinois economic forecast*. <https://cgfa.ilga.gov/Upload/2022MoodyEconomicForecast.pdf>

Monroe, R.D. (n.d.). *Lincoln's biography*. Abraham Lincoln Historical Digitization Project. Northern Illinois University. <https://digital.lib.niu.edu/illinois/lincoln>

National Park Service (2016). *National Heritage Area evaluation guide*. National Heritage Areas Evaluations. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/evaluations.htm>

National Park Service (2020a). *Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area*. <https://www.nps.gov/places/abraham-lincoln-national-heritage-area.htm>

National Park Service. (2020b). *National Heritage Areas*. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/upload/Final-printed-NHA-unigrid-2021-55-areas-508-L.pdf>

National Park Service (2021). *Abraham Lincoln chronology*. Lincoln Home. <https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/homechronology.htm>

National Park Service. (2022). *Park Reports*. <https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/Reports/Park/LIHO> Accessed June 14, 2023.

National Park Service. (2023a). *Funding & Technical Assistance*. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/funding-and-technical-assistance.htm>

National Park Service. (2023b). *Lincoln Home National Historic Site*. <https://www.nps.gov/liho/index.htm>

National Park Service. (2023c). *New Philadelphia National Historic Site*. <https://www.nps.gov/places/new-philadelphia-nhs.htm>

State of Illinois. (2000). *The Illinois*. MuseumLink Illinois, a project of the Illinois State Museum. https://www.museum.state.il.us/muslink/nat_amer/post/htmls/il.html

State of Illinois. (2023). *Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum*. <https://presidentlincoln.illinois.gov/>

Tourism Economics. (June 2022). *Economic impact of visitors in Illinois 2021*. <https://www.enjoyillinois.com/assets/PDF-Docs/Illinois-Tourism-Economic-Impact-2021.pdf>

Tripp Umbach. (2017). *The economic impact of National Heritage Areas: A case study approach*. https://www.nps.gov/subjects/heritageareas/upload/Final_Abraham-Lincoln-NHA-Economic-Impact-Study-2017.pdf

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. (May 2023). *Midwest Information Office: Illinois*. <https://www.bls.gov/regions/midwest/illinois.htm#eag>. Accessed June 22, 2023.

United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. (June 21, 2023). *Economy at a glance: Springfield, IL*. https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.il_springfield_msa.htm. Accessed June 22, 2023.

United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). *QuickFacts*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/IL/POP010210> Accessed June 1, 2023.

United States, Congress. Public Law 110-229, Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. May 8, 2008. Stat. 122.754. Title IV – National Heritage Areas. State listing 16 USC 461. Subtitle C – Abraham Lincoln National Heritage Area. <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/PLAW-110publ229>

VandeCreek, D. (n.d.). *Lincoln's biography*. Abraham Lincoln Historical Digitization Project. Northern Illinois University. <https://digital.lib.niu.edu/illinois/lincoln>

Visit Springfield Illinois. (n.d.). *Lincoln Tomb*.
<https://www.visitspringfieldillinois.com/LocationDetails/?id=Lincoln-Tomb>

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study research: Design and methods (Vol. 5)*. Sage.