



2018-2022 Five-Year Evaluations: Analysis & Reflections

IMLS Grants to States

June 2022



Goals for Presentation

- Share insights from Evaluation Process & Community of Practice
- Highlight key findings from evaluations
- Group activity: lessons learned/group share
- Report out of interactions



Show of Hands

- How many of you were “here” from plan to evaluation?
- How many first-timers to the party (for the evaluations)?

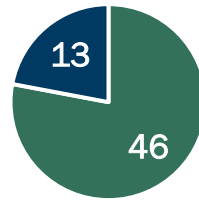




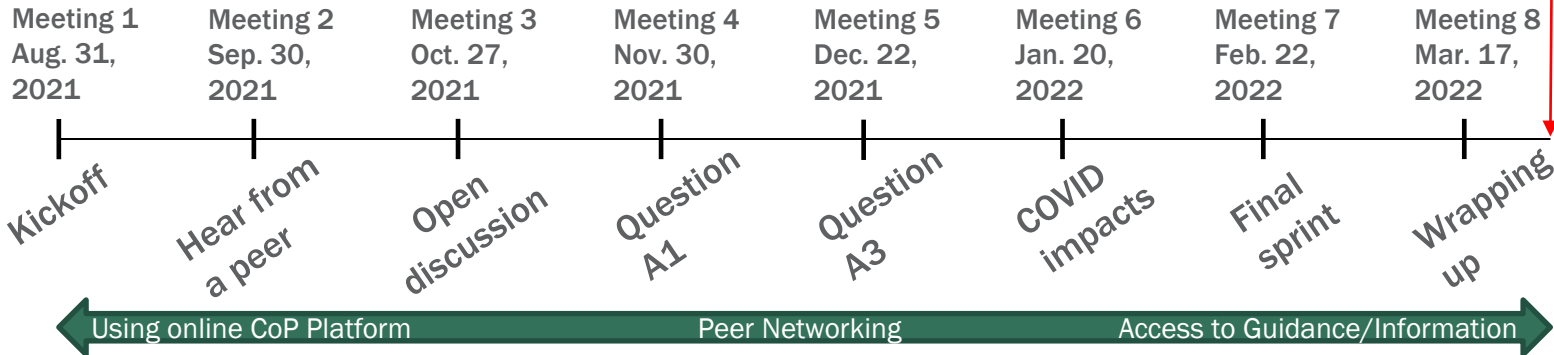
5 Year Evaluations: Community of Practice

Community of Practice (CoP)

State/Territory Attendance



- Attended
- Did not attend



March 30, 2022
Evals due



Community of Practice – High-level learnings (1)

CoP Mechanics

- Online platform useful as a repository of documents but not used by evaluators to interact
- Recordings of the meetings were helpful and appreciated
- People's level of comfort in talking increases over time, and intentional use of the chat supports engagement and discussion
- Helpful mix of evaluators and LSTA/library reps



Community of Practice – High-level learnings (2)

Major Discussion Topics

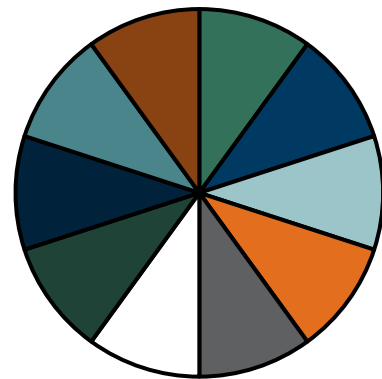
- Distinguishing LSTA from CARES & ARPA \$
- Goals and measurement
 - Aspirational vs. practical/operational
 - Time horizon for achievement
 - “Achievement” as a metric
 - Celebrating “Partially Achieved”



Community of Practice – High-level learnings (3)

Major Discussion Topics

- Beneficiary groups – measurement
- Focal areas – measurement
- COVID disruptions, innovations, and impact on goals
- Data collection challenges and solutions
→ Recommendations





Community of Practice – High-level learnings (4)

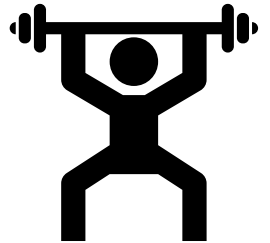
Major Discussion Topics

- Disseminating evaluation outcomes
- “Equity”
- Peer tips & IMLS process and content guidance
- Suggestions for the 5-year evaluation plan guidance
- Continue the CoP – builds culture of evaluation in the library world

Community of Practice – High-level learnings (5)

Final reports on challenges and solutions

- Challenges
 - Demands on LSTA Coordinators & other state offices
 - Delays in receiving data – multiples causes
 - Good data and ideas “on the cutting room floor”
- Solutions
 - Collaboration between Evaluator & LSTA Coordinator – efficient and enjoyable!
 - Discussion of goals, project assignments, and the vested interest & steps towards goals
 - Application of learnings to the next plan





5 Year Evaluations: Findings



Plans vs. Evaluations

- During COVID, plans and goals did not change in a significant way BUT disruptions impacted *activities*
- Many states achieved a different mix of focal areas in their evaluations, compared to what they had anticipated in their plans

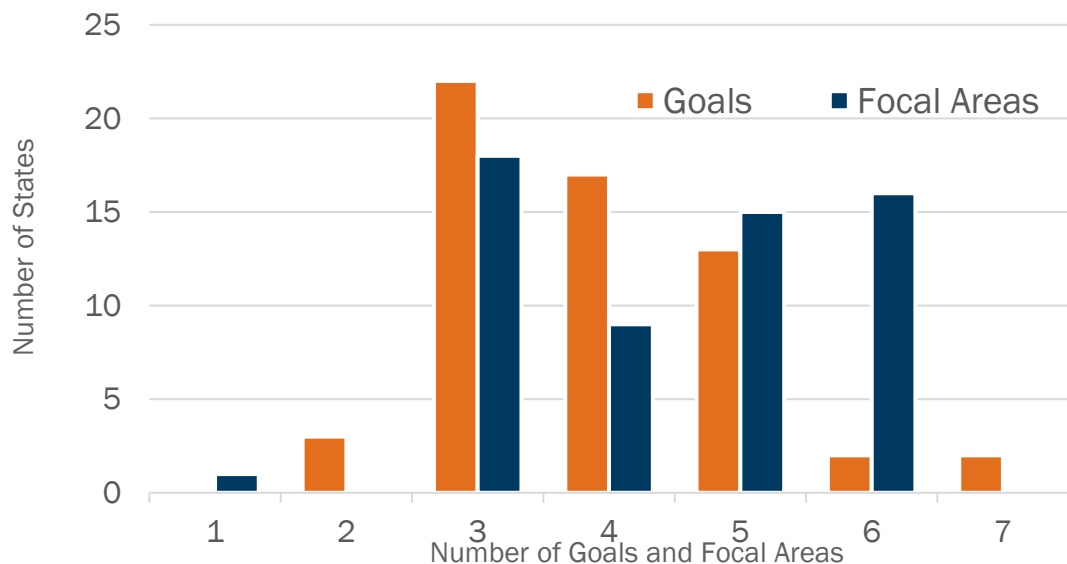
Example:

Arkansas' did not sub-grant prior to COVID but goals were flexible enough to accommodate the change



Goals and Focal Areas

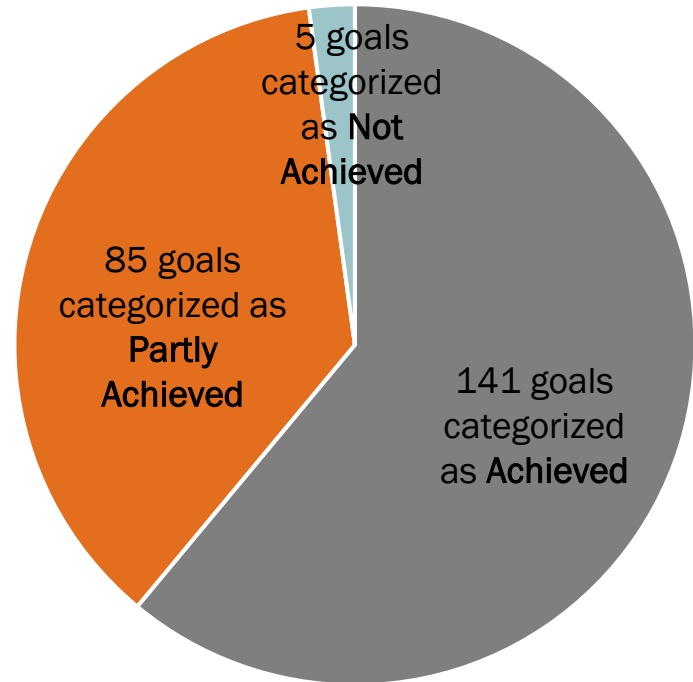
- Average number of goals across states: 3.4
- Average number focal areas across states: 4.4 (out of 6)



Goals

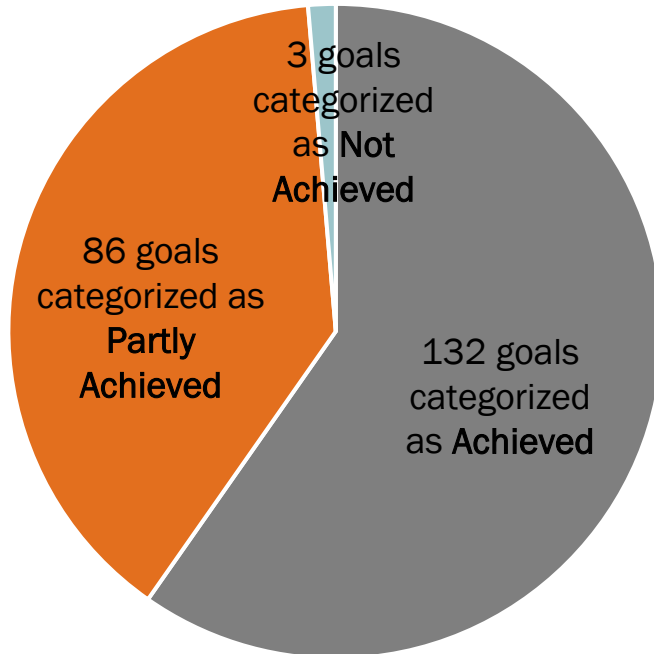
- Out of 231 goals across all states, 61% were categorized as Achieved
- 18 states categorized *all goals as Achieved*
- 5 states categorized *all goals as Partly Achieved*
- 36 states categorized goals with a *mix of indicators*

Goal Categorization

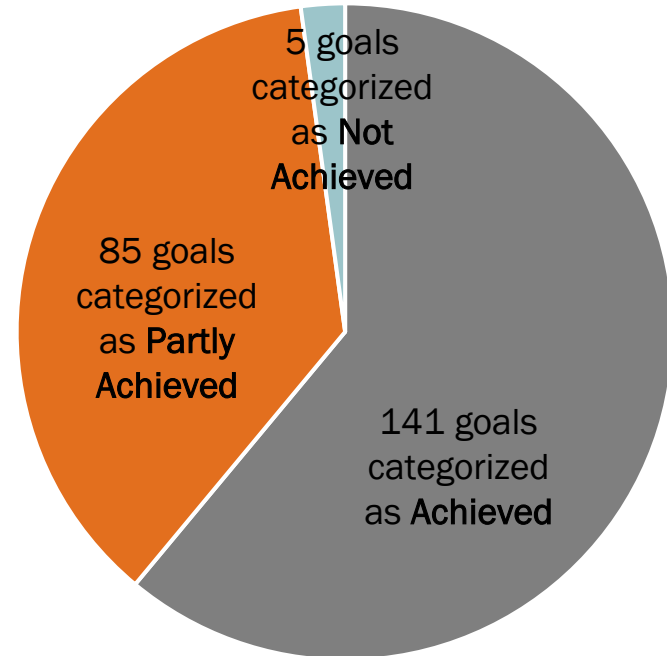


Goal categorization – cycle comparison

2013-2017



2018-2022





Reasons for Partly Achieved

- Unmet project targets/goals (all or partial)
- Staff/resource constraints
- Projects not sustainable
- COVID disruptions
- Outcomes were difficult to measure
- Lack of available partners/partner engagement

Reasons for Not Achieved

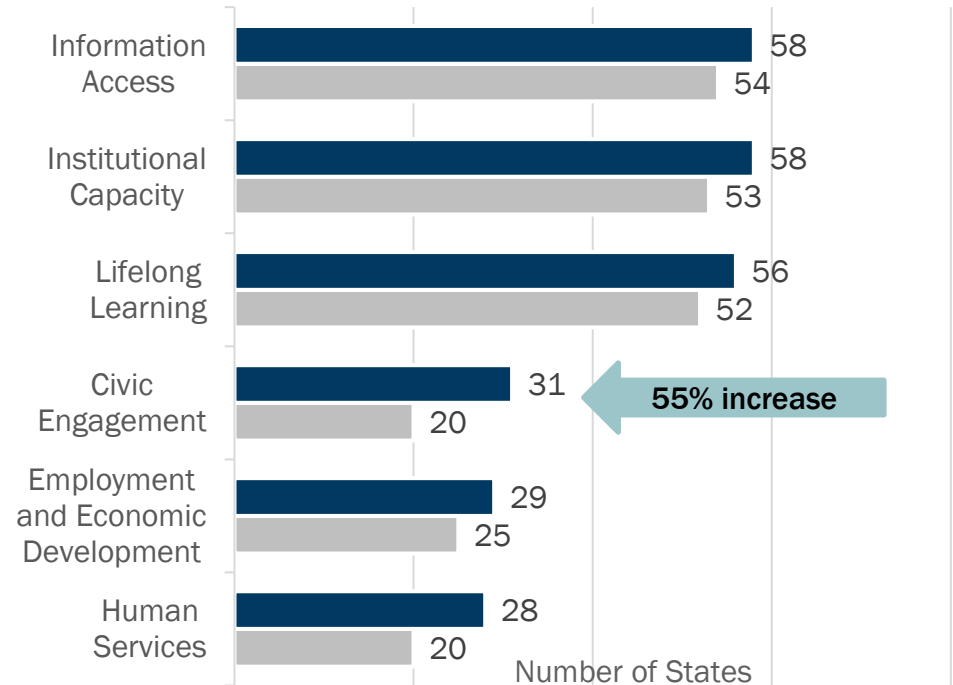
- Projects/trainings not implemented
- COVID disruptions
- Overly-ambitious goals



Focal Areas by state – cycle comparison

- All focal areas saw increases as the total number of states and territories grew from 56 to 59
- Civic engagement grew by the highest proportion

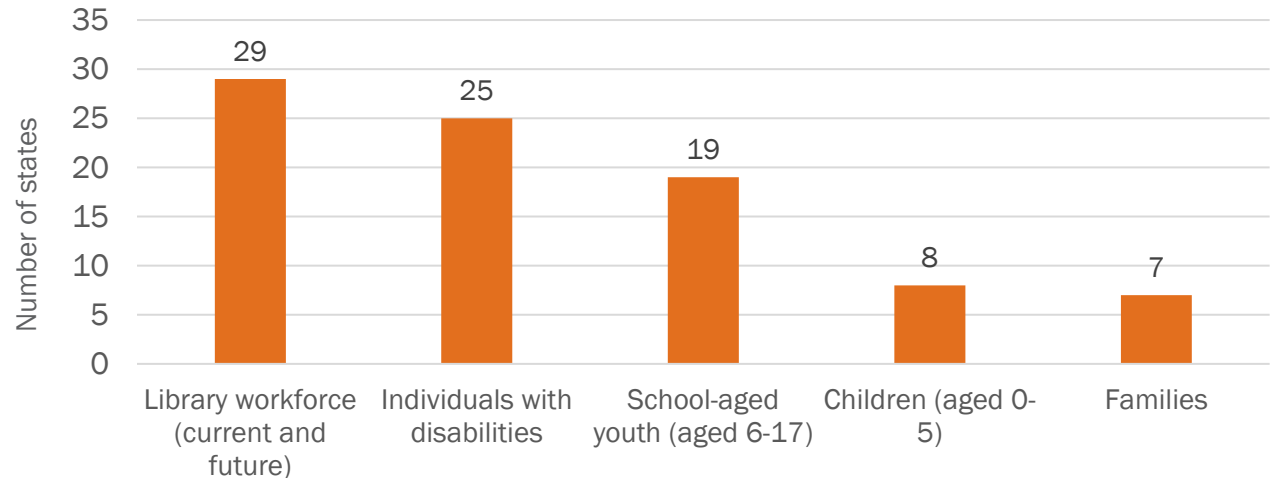
2013-17 and 2018-22



Beneficiary groups

- Library Workforce was a “substantial focus” for the highest number of states
- 14 states noted no substantial focus on specific beneficiary groups

Beneficiary Groups as a “Substantial Focus” for States

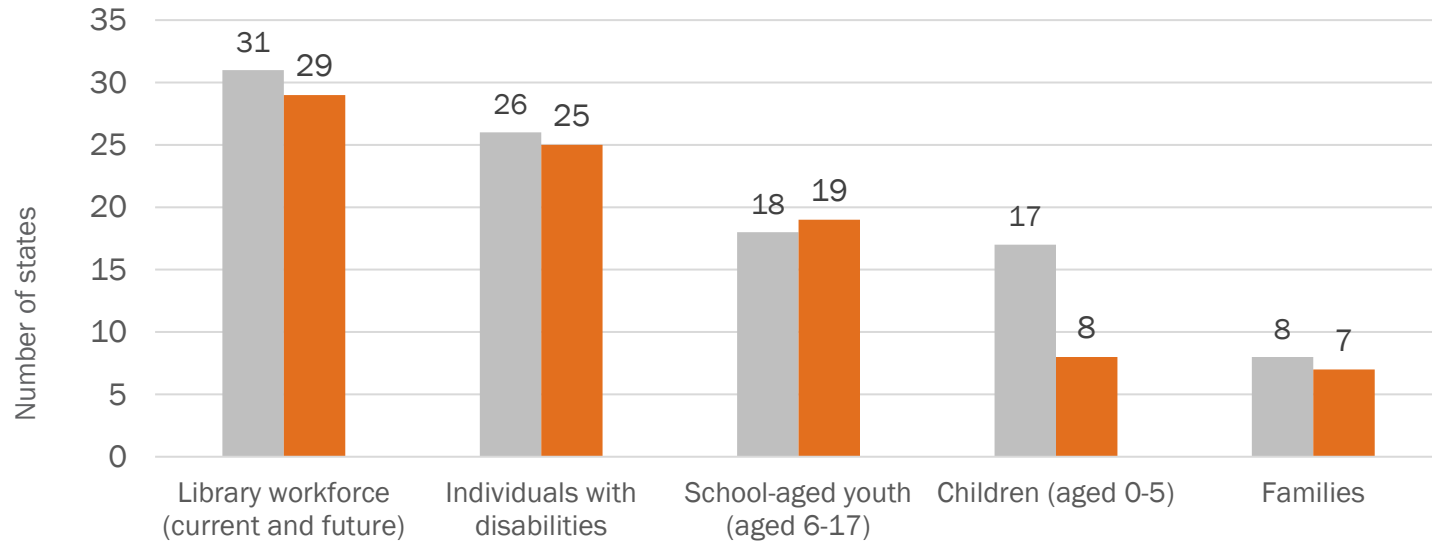


Other beneficiary groups reported, but not included in chart above include:

- Ethnic or minority populations (8 states)
- Individuals living below the poverty line (8 states)
- Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills (4 states)
- Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed (5 states)
- Immigrants/refugees (2 states)

Beneficiary groups – cycle comparison

2013-17 and 2018-22



Insights on Beneficiary Groups

- Impact vs. 10% threshold – what gets counted?
- General/universal programs that reach the full demographics of the population may limit reporting,
- Guidelines are for “activities” not “funds”





SPR data & uses – Mapping to Goals

- 5 Year Evaluation
- Internal (staff, colleagues) and external (libraries, associations, legislators, public) reporting
- For insights into project ideas & budget development
- Made publicly available on websites
- Conference and/or meeting presentations
- Infographics/dashboards



SPR Data & Uses: Examples

- "Compared to the 2013-17 evaluation, the Colorado State Library (CSL) has improved dramatically its compliance with the LSTA State Program Report system in terms of both output and outcome data collection." - CO
- "Review of SPR data provides some clear opportunities for economizing on shared learnings, or might allow trainers to establish train-the-trainer models to capitalize on individualized areas of expertise." - NC



Applying Eval CoP Learnings to 5-Year Plans

- Consider measurement in writing your goals:
 - Ask
 - Are they measurable /can you define measures?
 - Are they aspirational or operational?
 - Are they achievable?
 - What does “achievement” mean?
 - Are there too many? (“sweet spot” 3-4)
 - Look at past goals, identify/clarify perceptions and expectations
- Plan for data collection and analysis
- Leverage the data for implementation wins





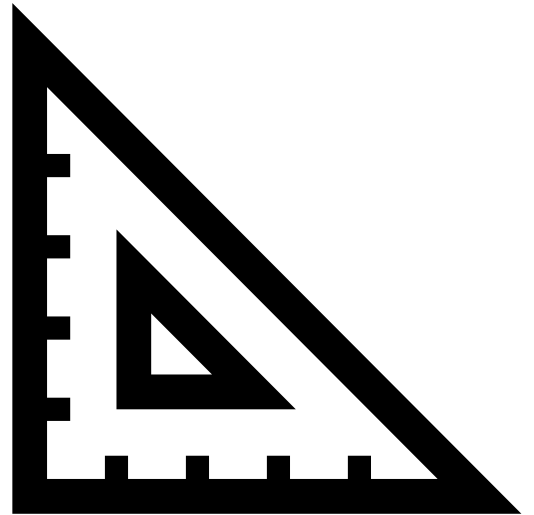
Group Activity

For the morning: Reflecting on Evaluations:

- *What were the **hardest** things to measure*
- *What were the **easiest** things to measure*

For the afternoon: Anticipating how to measure in the new plans:

- *Goals*
- *Focal areas*
- *Beneficiaries*





Report Out

