

Maryland State Library Agency

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States Program Implementation Evaluation FFY 2018 - FFY 2022

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EVALUATION SUMMARY

Summary Introduction

The Maryland State Library Agency (MSLA) was established as an independent State agency on July 1, 2017, opening greater strategic opportunities for the future. MSLA oversees the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled, the Public Libraries and State Networking Branch (PLSNB), the State Library Resource Center, the three Regional Libraries, County Public Library Capital Project Grants Program, and the Deaf Culture Digital Library. A key strength of the organization of library services in Maryland is the generally strong support public libraries have at the county (local government) level. All 24 library systems are county based, with the exception of the Enoch Pratt Free Library in the City of Baltimore.

Given Maryland's estimated population of 6,177,224,¹ the state's annual Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States² allotment from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) of approximately \$3,050,985³ million per year translates into \$0.49⁴ per person on an annual basis. LSTA funds alone are inadequate to meet the library and information needs of approximately 6.2 million residents. The MSLA's challenge has been to find ways to make \$0.49 per person transformative in terms of library services; to leverage a small amount of money to accomplish major results by strategically deploying funds and leveraging other public and private monies in support of library and information services.

There are four goal statements in Maryland's ***Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan 2018-2022***. They are:

GOAL 1: The Maryland State Library will strengthen libraries' institutional capacity through collaborative continuing education and staff development opportunities that will create a strong and innovative library workforce.

GOAL 2: The Maryland State Library will help libraries improve access to information for their users.

GOAL 3: The Maryland State Library will help libraries develop lifelong learning opportunities in order to improve users' formal education and general knowledge and skills.

GOAL 4: The Maryland State Library will help libraries foster economic and employment development opportunities in order to facilitate job growth in Maryland.

¹ United States Census Bureau Population estimate July 1, 2020

² The report will refer to the Library Services and Technology Act's Grants to States Program simply as LSTA throughout this report.

³ Four Year LSTA Grants to States Allotment average ((FFY 2018 State allotment + FFY 2019 State allotment + FFY 2020 State allotment + FFY 2021 State allotment) / 4)

⁴ Four Year LSTA Grants to States State allotment average / United States Census Bureau population estimate July 1, 2020

Retrospective Question A-1 Summary

Agency's Internal Assessment and Evaluator's Assessment

As part of the assessment process, the evaluators asked the Maryland State Librarian and the Maryland State Library LSTA Coordinator to offer their personal appraisals of progress their agency had made toward achieving each of the four goals included in the Maryland State Library Agency's FFY 2018 - FFY 2022 five-year plan early on in the process. The evaluators prefaced their request for this internal assessment by noting the fact that the state was only three years into the implementation of the five-year plan.

Table 1 offers a summary of both the Maryland State Library Agency's internal assessment and the evaluators' conclusions.

Table 1 - Maryland State Library Agency's and Evaluator's Assessment of Achievement		
GOAL	MSL's Internal Assessment	Evaluators' Assessment
GOAL 1: The Maryland State Library will strengthen libraries' institutional capacity through collaborative continuing education and staff development opportunities that will create a strong and innovative library workforce.	Partially achieved	Achieved
GOAL 2: The Maryland State Library will help libraries improve access to information for their users.	Partially achieved	Achieved
GOAL 3: The Maryland State Library will help libraries develop lifelong learning opportunities in order to improve users' formal education and general knowledge and skills.	Partially achieved	Achieved
GOAL 4: The Maryland State Library will help libraries foster economic and employment development opportunities in order to facilitate job growth in Maryland.	Partially achieved	Partially achieved

Evaluator's Summary

The evaluators conclude that the agency has diligently and strategically achieved three out of four of its goals. MSLA continues to excel in accomplishing the goal of ensuring the growth of the professionals working in libraries via **Goal 1: Institutional Capacity**. With Goal 1, MSL sought to create a strong and innovative library workforce through collaborative continuing education and staff development opportunities. Goal 1 expenditures represent 62.79% of Maryland's total LSTA state allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period. Three projects fell under this goal. *Staff Development* was routinely cited as the most critical area of LSTA funding by focus group participants and selected as one of the programs with the most significant impact by 71% of survey respondents. In the experience of the evaluators, Maryland has one of

the strongest LSTA-funded staff development programs in the nation. The funding is invaluable in enabling staff in rural and smaller libraries to attend state and national conferences and access opportunities that would otherwise be out of reach. Under *Library Development*, LSTA funded the salaries of SLAA staff who dedicated a significant amount of their time and other resources to the ongoing successful efforts of capacity building in Maryland libraries -- for example, statewide training and shared resources, such as circulating A/V equipment. The *Infrastructure* project funded competitive sub-grants that assisted libraries in the development of Strategic Plans, Feasibility Studies, Facilities Plans, and more. According to interviews with library directors, LSTA-funded Feasibility Studies were critical in enabling less economically well-off libraries to subsequently access state capital funds for construction.

With **Goal 2: Access to Information**, MSLA sought to help libraries improve access to information for users. Goal 2 expenditures represent 19.60% of Maryland's total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period. Three projects fell under this goal. *The Statewide Statistics and Data Innovation* project enabled libraries to analyze data about library operations and use from numerous sources in new and innovative ways to inform decision making and tell the story of library value and impact. In the words of one director, "The statewide statistics and data innovation work has been hugely transformative for [our library]." The largest proportion of funding was for the continuation of the virtual chat reference service, *Maryland AskUsNow!*, which was discontinued at the end of FFY 2019. While a valuable program for much of its lifespan, the evolution of technologies, services and customer behaviors led to a logical conclusion of the service. *Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access* ensures that Marylanders from all cultural, geographic, and economic backgrounds have the opportunity to learn how to become technology users and creators, and funded many successful sub-grants to library systems, with projects as varied as traveling STEAM learning labs, technology training for library staff, and programming robots. In particular, hotspot lending during the pandemic was cited by rural library directors as the LSTA-funded program with the greatest impact.

Goal 3: Lifelong Learning successfully combined statewide programs and sub-grants to help libraries develop lifelong learning opportunities for customers. Goal 3 expenditures represent 17.61% of Maryland's total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period, and three projects fell under this goal. *Youth Services in Maryland Libraries* funds the critical position of Youth Services Coordinator (YSC) at the SLAA, as well as the statewide Summer Reading Program. Library stakeholders report that Summer Reading, "continues to connect families to the library and to promote literacy and lifelong learning in the community. These programs and services would not be possible without LSTA funding." Project Ready training for youth services librarians had a powerful impact on participants, who took this diversity, equity, and inclusion work back to their libraries. Training youth in media literacy skills was a focus this cycle, and the YSC believes it to be one of the most impactful areas of the LSTA program. Additionally, the *One Maryland One Book* project is viewed as a staple offering of the MSLA. This cycle, the program experienced consistently high participation across more than 260 events and received excellent patron feedback. *Lifelong Learning* funds a mix of competitive sub-grants and statewide projects. In interviews, staff highlighted the FFY 2019 Prison Library Collection Development initiative, a significant undertaking and unique opportunity to support Maryland's

incarcerated population. The innovative statewide Choose Civility program additionally positioned libraries to be the catalyst for new ways to convey information and create dialogue, with an 83% participation rate of libraries in the state and an overwhelmingly positive response from community members. This program “positioned libraries as the community’s kitchen table, where people from diverse backgrounds could meet and start to build relationships around shared values.”

Goal 4: Economic and Employment Development. While none of the projects and expenditures associated with LSTA funding in FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 are reported in association with the statewide initiative to foster economic and employment development opportunities for citizens, several activities under other statewide initiatives support Goal 4. The main work that the agency has done to support workforce development across libraries is to coordinate efforts across systems. These efforts require time from PLSNB staff who are LSTA-funded, and involve working closely with the State Library Resource Center, which conducts statewide work on behalf of libraries around workforce development. MSLA created and led a library Community of Practice around workforce development to share resources and best practices, and provided statewide access to databases to enhance workforce development skills. LSTA-funded staff worked with the Attorney General’s Access to Justice Project to provide pro-bono resources around COVID-19 employment issues, provided programs on workforce training to library staff, and promoted prison to public library workforce opportunities among prison librarians and public library administrators. Components of the LSTA-funded Prison Collection Development and TechEd in Maryland projects related to Goal 4, as did Washington County’s Work Ready Community Initiative and Baltimore County’s Junior Achievement BizTown. These efforts were funded under other Goals. While authoring the Five-Year Plan, MSLA had anticipated significant demand for funding for workforce development projects via competitive sub-grants. However, no grant proposals were received in this area, resulting in no direct expenditures attributed to this goal.

Crisis and opportunity. COVID posed a major obstacle to libraries during this funding cycle, but MSLA pivoted to adapt new technologies and help libraries where they needed it most. One future challenge to consider will be how Maryland libraries continue to support the expectations and need for digital services that developed during the pandemic, while reintroducing and equally supporting in-person services as the pandemic wanes. Many new customers gained during the pandemic may have only discovered the libraries during the increase in digital programming and services over the past two years. To meet new expectations for digital services alongside in-person services, libraries will require additional staff and professional development, which may lead to changes in service models, including modifications to the library infrastructure and increased digital literacy programming.

Overall, MSLA rose admirably to the many challenges presented to SLAAs in FFY 2020 and beyond. Maryland public library directors have a high level of awareness of the role LSTA dollars plays in statewide programs, as well as an exceptionally good relationship with the SLAA. In the words of one public library director, “LSTA funding has a customer service impact

at almost every level of our organizations, from frontline staff all the way up to our trustees and board members."

Retrospective Question A-2 Summary

A-2. To what extent did MSL's Five-Year Plan activities achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?

The Measuring Success focal areas are: Lifelong Learning, Information Access, Institutional Capacity, Economic and Employment Development, Civic Engagement, and Human Services. Four of the six goals map directly to goals in MSLA's LSTA Five-Year Plan. Those that do not -- Human Services and Civic Engagement -- were addressed through various projects and programming. Appendix F provides a detailed mapping to LSTA focal areas and intents on a project by project basis. The results achieved are in line with the national priorities associated with the Measuring Success framework and their corresponding intents.

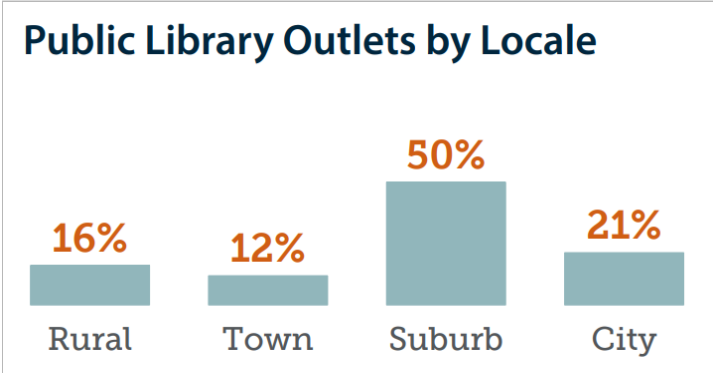
Retrospective Question A-3 Summary

A-3. Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for MSLA's Five-Year Plan activities? (Yes/No)

Only one project reached the 10% expenditure threshold identified by IMLS as representing a substantial focus on a specific identified group. *Staff Development* accounted for 28.86% of total expenditures during the evaluation period, representing the *Library Workforce*. However, this does not mean that other target audiences did not significantly benefit from the efforts supported with LSTA funding. Expenditures under Goal 2's *Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access* project and Goal 3's *Youth Services and Lifelong Learning* project directly benefited *Families, Children, School-Aged Youths, and Individuals with Disabilities*. Furthermore, the evaluators were able to identify individual subgrants that were awarded during the period covered by this assessment that indirectly benefited other audiences identified by IMLS.

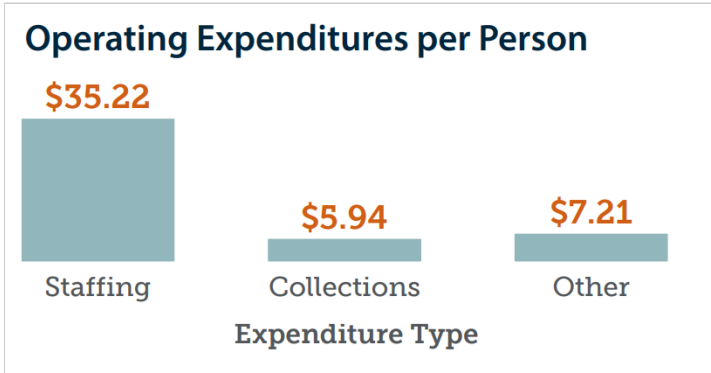
EVALUATION REPORT

Maryland Public Library Context



Maryland has a total of 24 public library jurisdictions employing 1,427 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff based on the 2020 PLS survey; similarly, 48 institutions of higher education employing 475.08 FTE librarians based on the 2020 Academic Library Survey; and, 25 public school districts employing 1,149.83 full-time librarians According to the National Center for Educational Statistics' (NCES)

Elementary/Secondary Information System (EISi). The public library workforce represents about 46% of the librarians in the state.



According to the most recent PLS State Profiles,⁵ Maryland's 24 public library jurisdictions represent 190 branches, the majority of them in the suburbs (50%). Overall staffing levels per capita are higher than national averages. Total operating revenue for these libraries is about \$50 per resident.⁶ The per capita collection items is less than the national average, but the circulation per capita

is higher than the national average. Service statistics such as library visits and computers per capita are similar to national averages.

- Staff \$38.33 Per Person
- Collections \$6.36 Per Person
- Other \$6.6 Per Person

The majority of the expenditures goes to staffing, followed by collections, and other areas. Maryland is a relatively densely populated state. No public library system services a population legal area with fewer than 10,000 people.⁷ Overall, the majority of total spending in public libraries goes to staffing, and the LSTA program has an emphasis on ensuring staff continuing education and professional development opportunities remain current, relevant, robust, effective, and efficient. Maryland has a

⁵ <https://www.ims.gov/data/catalog/public-libraries-survey/fy-2017-pls-state-profiles>
⁶ The source of funding per person includes federal, state, local and other funds.
⁷ Public Library Survey FY 2019 Data Files, PLS_FY10_AE_pud19i.csv
<https://www.ims.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/public-libraries-survey>

historically strong program of staff development and LSTA funds contribute unquestionably to maintaining this strength.

There are four goal statements in the *Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan 2018-2022* for Maryland. Each of the goals is stated below and LSTA-funded activities carried out in support of the goal are described. Finally, the evaluators’ assessment of whether each goal has been achieved, partially achieved, or not achieved is presented.

Goal 1 Retrospective Assessment - Institutional Capacity

GOAL 1: The Maryland State Library will strengthen libraries’ institutional capacity through collaborative continuing education and staff development opportunities that will create a strong and innovative library workforce.

Goal 1 Description and Discussion

Following are the titles of the projects and the total amount of LSTA FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 funding that was expended on activities undertaken in support of Goal 1.

PROJECT TITLE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL
Staff Development	\$ 2,515,399.69
Library Development	\$ 2,164,287.18
Infrastructure	\$ 793,401.31
GOAL SUBTOTAL	\$ 5,473,088.18

Goal 1 expenditures represent 62.79% of Maryland’s total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period. These expenditures cover three projects, all of which continued from the prior LSTA funding cycle and carried through the three years of evaluation in the current cycle. *Staff Development* accounts for 28.86% of funding over the three-year period. *Library Development* accounts for 24.83% of funding, and *Infrastructure* accounts for 9.10% of funding. In a focus group, library directors emphasized the importance of these funds, which support projects that are mostly invisible to the public: “Institutional Capacity is really preparing us for decades to come, even if we don’t see the day-to-day effects now.”

Staff Development was routinely cited as the most critical area of LSTA support by focus group participants, and selected as one of the programs with the highest impact by 71% of survey respondents. In the experience of the evaluators, Maryland has one of the strongest LSTA-funded staff development programs in the nation. Under this program, MSLA invests

significant personnel and financial resources to support a strong and innovative Maryland library workforce by planning and implementing continuing education and staff development opportunities. These include online learning platforms, staff development and conference grants, the Library Associate Training Institute (LATI), intensive Maryland Leadership workshops, leadership development, and more. MSLA's Organizational Learning & Innovation Coordinator is also funded by LSTA dollars. This critical position coordinates a suite of statewide learning platforms and training efforts. All of these efforts are widely recognized. In an interview, Professor and Senior Associate Dean at the University of Maryland College of Information Studies Brian Butler reported that the “leadership development the MSLA is doing at all levels is a jewel within the state, and one of the best programs of its type in the country. Maintaining investment in that is critical.” A public library director commented that, “Developing library leadership with training provided by LSTA funds has made Maryland libraries better and has allowed [us] to grow our next generation of managers from within our system.” The long-running LATI was identified by MSLA as the program they believe has been the most impactful in the state, and the Institute was called out by both survey respondents and library directors in focus groups with feedback such as, “LATI is a crucial piece of our staff development and provides an excellent foundation for librarianship.”

Via Staff Development grants, MSLA provides funds to every public library system to support professional development. These are valued highly by libraries around the state, accounting for as much as 95% of smaller libraries' continuing education budgets.⁸ In the words of one library director, “If we didn't have it, we would have to reprioritize almost everything we do. It would have a negative impact on public services at our libraries, and staff wouldn't have the same level of skills [that they do] to provide excellent service back to their communities.” Multiple directors praised these grants' impact on rural libraries: “staff development grants have been invaluable in enabling staff in rural libraries to attend state and national conferences. So many ideas are gleaned at these conferences and connections made that rural libraries would be at a real disadvantage if staff could not attend.”

The sudden shift to virtual services that occurred with the onset of COVID posed a major obstacle to libraries during this funding cycle. During COVID, MSLA pivoted professional development to help libraries where they needed it most. A focus group attendee explained that at the onset of COVID “the trainings [MSLA] offered allowed us to use digital tools...and teach our staff skills they needed to acquire and put into practice quickly...it allowed us to be responsive, innovative, and continue to provide library services at a time it seemed it should be impossible.” For example, funds were expended under *Staff Development* to purchase Zoom licenses for all public libraries and for the Maryland Library Association (MLA). Focus group participants from the MLA emphasized the impact of this program, which enables them to reach more customers, conduct well-received virtual programming, and hold weekly meetups with other library staff to learn from each other in collaborative ways. Zoom licenses also enabled statewide MSLA programs such as “Maryland Libraries Together,” which has brought numerous high-profile virtual speakers for panel discussions. For example, antiracism activist and author Ibram X. Kendi's virtual event garnered over 270,000 participants from around the world in

⁸ QualityMetrics focus group with MAPLA members, 10/19/2021.

2020. A library director said, “Zoom enabled that huge program. None of us would have been able to have a program like that...Before, [we were] never able to bring big name authors to our little libraries [in person].”

Another activity funded under Staff Development that library staff praised during interviews and focus groups included the KnowBe4 Security Awareness Training. One library director stated that, “Libraries across Maryland are more secure for employees learning more about phishing and other threats and getting coaching to avoid cyber attacks.” A full 10% of comments were left in response to a survey question about the most impactful LSTA-funded program related to this relatively small expenditure. One of the projects MSLA included in its Five-Year Plan was to expand the statewide staff development blueprint process to include academic and school libraries, develop relationships, identify needs, and share resources statewide. An observation from Professor Butler speaks to the success of meeting this goal, as he commented on a remarkably successful relationship between MSLA and state public school system for librarian professional development: “They are sharing a professional development resource in ways I haven’t heard about happening elsewhere, sometimes officially and sometimes unofficially, coordinating programs. Our schools and libraries have the same jurisdiction here, which isn’t the case in all states, and lends a structural advantage.”

Under ***Library Development***, LSTA funds pay for the salaries of five and a half SLAA staff who dedicate a significant amount of their time and other resources to the ongoing efforts of capacity building in Maryland libraries. Funding covers salaries and benefits as well as office supplies; institutional dues; facilities costs such as utilities, furniture, and rent; catering and ASL interpreters for MSLA-sponsored programs; and staff travel and professional development. Most library directors are unaware that MSLA staff are LSTA-funded, and therefore did not discuss this aspect of funding directly in interviews and focus groups. However, MSLA staff worked with numerous statewide partners, assisted in piloting new initiatives, and supported statewide programs that equipped library staff with new skills related to media training, virtual reality and augmented reality innovation, crisis training and leadership, and technology planning. MSLA staff also provide one-on-one technical support and leadership to library administrators, staff, and trustees, and support statewide programs. They coordinated and facilitated meetings with statewide stakeholders in areas which ranged from e-content implementation, data analysis communities of practice, and large-scale projects planning. PLSNB consultants’ work crosses over into other goals and is discussed in other sections of this report: for example, much of the work towards Goal 4 was completed not with LSTA-funding of Goal 4-specific programs, but via the work of PLSNB staff coordinating and supporting statewide partnerships and initiatives.

While equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) initiatives were not written into the LSTA 5-Year Plan, a quarter of survey respondents highlighted such efforts as one of the highest areas of impact from LSTA funding. To a significant degree, these efforts came from within the Library and Staff Development programs. One survey respondent noted that, “the Institutional Capacity and Information Access funding has been the most significant in terms of long-term systemic advancement for our library, ranging from training for race and social equity to adding consultant support for digital equity programs and services.” Another respondent who works in Youth

Services provided the following details, “One example of how [LSTA funding has] helped my (majority minority) community: because of this funding, I've been able to participate in a year-long course on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion...My entire youth services staff has [gained] the benefit of in-depth EDI training.”

Through the **Infrastructure** project, many projects were funded to help support and improve the essential infrastructure of library systems statewide. This included statewide training and support on applying for E-Rate funding, as well as competitive sub-grants that assisted libraries to complete Strategic Plans, Feasibility Studies, and Facilities Plans. Additional sub-grants funded the creation of a multi-county marketing plan, a statewide public opinion poll, a local asset-mapping project, and a project in which two regional library systems collaborated to audit their Human Resources procedures and policies. Finally, funds in this area provided for a subscription to an OPAC for the use of the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled's nearly 10,000 customers and staff in FFY 2019 and FFY 2020. Facilities Planning was selected by 29% of survey respondents as one of the LSTA-funded activities with the most impact, second only to professional development and tied with sub-grants as an overarching category. According to interviews with library directors, LSTA-funded Feasibility Studies were critical in enabling less economically well-off libraries to access state capital funds for construction,⁹ which require a current Facilities Plan as an eligibility criteria. One director of a small, rural library emphasized, “If it hadn't been for the LSTA funding [for a space utilization plan], I wouldn't be where I am now!” This library was able to use the space utilization plan as a basis for a facilities master plan, which they used to apply for capital renovation funds, resulting in a successful renovation of their library.

Goal 1 Conclusion - Retrospective Question A-1

A-1. To what extent did MSLA's Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards Goal 1?

The evaluators conclude that Maryland State Library has ACHIEVED Goal 1. The longstanding staff and library development programs continue to be extremely successful and serve as capstones of the Maryland LSTA program, together accounting for slightly more than half of all LSTA expenditures (53.72%). The resilience and leadership shown by MSLA during the pandemic was praised by many throughout our conversations, as they quickly pivoted to offer support for new virtual technologies and services. Libraries in Maryland rely on MSLA for critical professional development, to train their leaders and trustees, and to provide essential Library Associate training. The Infrastructure program has demonstrated clear impact, in particular in enabling libraries to develop Facilities Master Plans, which then allow them to apply for and receive capital construction funding.

⁹ Maryland's Library Capital Grants Programs mandates that \$5 million dollars be included each year in the state budget (increased to \$7.5 million during the 2021 session of the General Assembly). The program began in FY 2008. Program goals include geographic diversity in the distribution of awards and a wealth-based match formula to encourage local jurisdictions to fund urgent and necessary public library development across the state.

Goal 2 Retrospective Assessment - Access to Information

GOAL 2: The Maryland State Library will help libraries improve access to information for their users.

Goal 2 Description and Discussion

Following are the titles of the projects and the total amount of LSTA FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 funding that was expended on activities undertaken in support of Goal 2.

PROJECT TITLE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL
Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access	\$ 915,059.19
Maryland AskUsNow!	\$ 342,974.00
Statewide Statistics and Data Innovation	\$ 450,163.70
GOAL SUBTOTAL	\$ 1,708,196.89

Goal 2 expenditures represent 19.60% of Maryland’s total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period. As with goal one, these expenditures cover three projects, all of which continued from the prior LSTA funding cycle. *Maryland AskUsNow* accounted for 3.93% of funding over the three-year period; however, this long-running project was discontinued at the end of FFY 2019. Both the *Statewide Statistics and Data Innovation*, which accounts for 5.16% of funding, and *Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access* accounts for 10.50% of funding are scheduled to continue through the full five-year cycle.

Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access, as described in the SPR, ensures that Marylanders from all cultural, geographic, and economic backgrounds have the opportunity to learn how to become technology creators rather than just consumers. Education, programming, new digital products, and innovative learning spaces provided Marylanders the opportunity to expand their knowledge and experiences with digital tools and technology. A cornerstone activity is the ongoing funding of a statewide E-Rate consultant who trains and assists public library staff with applying for and receiving E-Rate funding. Having access to professional consultants, a listserv, regular training, and a coordinated communication system all create a support structure for libraries.

Numerous innovative sub-grants also fall under this program. Libraries conduct projects as varied as programming a humanoid robot, providing technology training for staff, programming focused on digital collaboration and social interaction for teens, traveling science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) learning labs, and lending wifi hotspots in rural locations. The Talbot County Free Library developed a mobile STEAM lab, using funds to train staff in

STEAM and 3D printer programs, create the mobile lab, purchase library materials to allow for home exploration of STEAM topics, and host STEAM programs at outreach partner locations such as the YMCA, schools, and community centers. Hotspot lending was praised by rural library directors in a focus group as one of the LSTA-funded programs with the greatest impact on the citizens of Maryland. This program was particularly crucial during the pandemic when many Marylanders found themselves unexpectedly required to telework and attend virtual school, unable at times to access library facilities, which serve as community anchors for internet access. Via the program, MSLA made grants available to libraries to expand hotspot lending programs, and also provided funds for libraries to market the service. According to the director of the Worcester County Library, “Wireless hotspots allow people otherwise ‘unconnected’ to complete GED programs, to help their kids do homework, and to search for jobs.”¹⁰

The TechEd in Maryland activity occurred in all three years of the evaluation period. This program aims to help Maryland libraries become leaders in developing a workforce with 21st century skills, educating children and adults to impact the future of technology. Under this program, four Virtual Reality/Augmented Reality lending kits circulate to public libraries around the state, which include various hardware and collection development materials to help libraries determine what they’d like to purchase for their collections. Unity programming classes, taught by Code in the Schools, were also funded. The 4th-6th years of a keystone statewide library technology conference, MDTechConnect, were also funded under this project (note that funding for this conference was moved to Goal 1 in FFY 2020). The one-day conference welcomes staff from all types of libraries working in or enthusiastic about IT to share and learn about IT topics in libraries.

This program also funds the SimplyE software used to enhance services within Maryland's Digital eLibrary. The app aggregates digital library content from many vendors, allowing all content owned by an individual library system to be accessed in one place. SimplyE was cited by one director as one of the projects with the most direct impact on library patrons.

The ***Maryland AskUsNow! (AUN!)*** project provided a free, 24/7 online library chat reference service. Maryland librarians provided research and information help, with backup support from library staff in other states and countries. The program was funded by MSLA and managed by a staff member at the Enoch Pratt Free Library. The long-running program was founded in 2003 and ran for almost two decades in various forms. While customer satisfaction with the quality of the service was high (around 90% positive), use of the program was in decline for most of the past decade.¹¹ According to MSLA, a key factor in decline of use was customers’ increased reliance on smartphones, and the ready access to information that they provide. Staff attribute the decline in large part to a catch-22: non-intuitive technology of the OCLC QuestionPoint platform that ran the service (one of only two service providers), which in turn fueled the loss of some major partners -- such as the University of Maryland Libraries -- who left the statewide program to set up their own virtual reference services. Other libraries indicated that they would

¹⁰ <https://www.co.worcester.md.us/news/library-launches-wifi-hotspot-lending-program>

¹¹ See appendix J: MSLA memorandum - Sunsetting Ask Us Now!

not continue participating in staffing the program due to local staffing levels, and the perceived return on investment. While large libraries have the capacity to fund and manage their own services, smaller libraries do not; yet, the system's success hinged on both types of partners participating in the program. An evaluation of the service in 2013 indicated that there was still sufficient demand to continue the service, but a formal evaluation of the project conducted by the MSLA in FFY 2019 showed that use of the program was in steep decline, dropping by more than 40% in five years, while the cost of the program continued to increase. A survey of libraries and a panel of key stakeholders revealed that ending the project would have minimal impact on library service, and given the amount of resources needed at the local level, it was difficult to justify continuation of the service. The program was discontinued at the end of FFY 2019 and MSLA did not receive any negative feedback in the following year regarding the discontinuation of the service. Interviewees indicated that if the program had been centrally managed by MSLA staff (a model used in Washington and Minnesota) there would have been a stronger chance of the program's success. The *AUN!* project manager reported interacting with State Library staff only via a second layer of management at their own library, which created a further disconnect between program management and statewide oversight.

The ***Statewide Statistics and Data Innovation*** project began in summer 2016 in collaboration with staff at the Prince George's County Memorial Library System. This program provides licenses for Tableau data visualization software to all Maryland public and regional library systems, consulting hours from contracted experts for dashboard creation and other projects in Tableau, training sessions, and monthly lunch & learn sessions. Beginning in FFY 2019, the program includes a statewide Enterprise license for PolicyMap, a web-based demographics and mapping tool. Tableau enables libraries to analyze data about library operations and use from numerous sources in new and innovative ways to inform decision making and tell the story of library value and impact, and 14% of survey respondents listed this program as one of the LSTA-funded programs with the greatest impact. Virtually all eligible libraries in the state have used the program at one point in time over its five years. The exception is regional libraries on the Eastern Shore using a cloud-based Polaris ILS, which cannot interface with a Tableau server. Libraries have used the software and paid consulting hours to build dashboards analyzing collections, facilities, and public services data, as well as community demographics at the branch level. Staff report that their dashboards help with decision making around collection management, database renewals, materials purchasing and transfer, staffing, and outreach. Library directors in focus groups discussed the various ways the program has helped support business operations, lend credibility to library talking points with legislators and funders, and allowed libraries to use data to make decisions nimbly. In the words of one director, "The statewide statistics and data innovation work has been hugely transformative for [our library]." Additionally, the statewide subscription to PolicyMap has helped libraries in understanding their communities at a granular level, furthering EDI initiatives, informing expansion of services, and allowing libraries to meet their customers where they are needed most. For example, one library recently mapped denial rates for home loans in their service area; in response to the disproportionately high denial rate, the library began offering programming around the issue. The success of this program is further reflected in the fact that some libraries are beginning to recruit staff to fill the role of data analyst. For many libraries, the lack of an in-house staff person

who can use Tableau is a pain-point. While wealthier libraries can afford an in-house data analyst, many systems rely on the consulting hours from Icimo to build dashboards and provide analytical support, and they report that it can be hard to access as many hours as are needed. Focus group participants report that some rural libraries are acting to address this issue by hiring a shared data-focused staff person at the regional level.

Goal 2 Conclusion - Retrospective Question A-1

A-1. To what extent did MSLA's Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards Goal 2?

The evaluators conclude that MSLA has ACHIEVED Goal 2. *The Statewide Statistics and Data Innovation* project enables libraries to analyze data about operations and use from numerous sources in new and innovative ways to inform decision making and tell the story of library value and impact. While *Maryland AskUsNow!* was a valuable program for much of its lifespan, the evolution of technologies, services, and customer behaviors led to a logical conclusion of the service during the evaluation period. The wide range of activities under the *Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access* program was effective in meeting its goal of providing opportunities for all Maryland residents to learn how to become technology creators and critical consumers. MSLA funded many successful sub-grants to library systems, with projects as varied as traveling STEAM learning labs, technology training for library staff, and programming robots. In particular, hotspot lending during the pandemic was cited by rural library directors as the LSTA-funded program with the greatest impact.

Goal 3 Retrospective Assessment - Lifelong Learning

GOAL 3: The Maryland State Library will help libraries develop lifelong learning opportunities in order to improve users' formal education and general knowledge and skills.

Goal 3 Description and Discussion

Following are the titles of the projects and the total amount of LSTA FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 funding that was expended on activities undertaken in support of Goal 3.

PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL
Lifelong Learning	\$ 657,349.30
Youth Services in Maryland Libraries	\$ 561,962.80
One Maryland One Book	\$ 315,855.95
GOAL SUBTOTAL	\$ 1,535,168.05

Goal 3 expenditures represent 17.61% of Maryland's total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period. *Youth Services in Maryland Libraries* is a longstanding program that accounts for 6.45% of funding. *One Maryland One Book* is another staple LSTA-funded program that accounts for 3.62% of funding over the three-year period. *Lifelong learning* – a new program this cycle – accounts for 7.54% of funding.

Lifelong Learning funds a mix of competitive sub-grants and statewide projects. In interviews, staff highlighted the FFY 2019 Prison Library Collection Development initiative, a significant undertaking and unique opportunity to support Maryland's incarcerated population. The project provided \$8,000 to each of 12 state prison libraries to fund collections: eight times the annual state materials purchasing budget per prison library. The project identified and selected a set of over 600 titles, and a set was provided to each state prison in Maryland. These collections were largely focused on emotional and physical health, career development, entrepreneurial skills, financial literacy, positive parenting, and self-improvement, as well as popular fiction. Another activity, mandated by state statute, is the ongoing Maryland Accessible Textbook (MAT) program, which provides low- and no-vision college students with textbooks converted to accessible formats. Additionally, the second year of the statewide Choose Civility project in FFY 2018 allowed library systems to provide programs in support of building positive connections between individuals in the community, including learning about different cultures, using social media positively, book talks on topics of equality and race, and how to discuss political and civic issues with politeness. Because no other agency in Maryland had championed this type of public education, libraries positioned themselves to be the catalyst for new ways to convey information and create dialogue. Participation increased from 75% of jurisdictions in FFY17 to 83% in FFY18. Staff reported that the response to these events was overwhelmingly positive, re-framing what a library program could be, and what goals it could achieve. For some library systems, the programs inspired local government officials to request new partnerships with libraries. In the words of staff members, "It positioned libraries as the community's kitchen table, where people from diverse backgrounds could meet and start to build relationships around shared values."

Competitive sub-grants included topics as diverse as nutritional literacy; cognitive health for the elderly, mobile makerspaces; equity, diversity, and inclusion programming; and rural collection development initiatives. These programs supported lifelong educational opportunities in both traditional and innovative ways. For example, the Brain Health sub-grant in a rural region of the state created programming to support the cognitive health of the elderly through participatory art, gaming, and technology programs. While the program was staff-intensive, the target population responded very positively. Another program, *Chef Connect*, used a portable kitchen to teach teenagers how to cook healthy meals on a limited budget.

In a survey of key stakeholders, the majority of whom were public library directors, 19% cited youth services and Summer Reading when asked about LSTA-funded programs with the greatest impact. ***Youth Services in Maryland Libraries*** is coordinated by an LSTA-funded

Youth Services Coordinator (YSC) at MSLA. This staff member supports youth programming and staff training initiatives in public libraries, and facilitates statewide partnerships that benefit young (0-18) patrons. Activities coordinated by the YSC include the long-running program for Summer Reading (SRP), Youth Services Partnerships, Early Literacy and Family Engagement Education, Teen Services and Technology Education, as well as a variety of competitive sub-grants revolving around lifelong learning for young people. Libraries around the state rely on MSLA to facilitate the statewide SRP each summer as a member of the Collaborative Summer Library Program consortium (CSLP), with the goal of preventing summer slide in all Maryland students and providing learning opportunities when school is not in session. In the words of survey respondents, “The funding for Youth Services is invaluable,” and, “SRP is a great way for us to prevent the summer slide and make sure young children are maintaining their literacy skills throughout the summer.” The statewide SRP program has an extremely well-received, long standing collaboration with the Baltimore Orioles baseball team that was paused during COVID. Through Youth Services Partnerships, the YSC provided statewide training to Youth Services staff on YALSA Transforming Teen Topics (T3), STEM, LGBTQ+ services, and additional topics, and participated in statewide programs and partnerships, such as the Family Engagement Coalition and State Early Childhood Advisory Council. Under the Early Literacy and Family Engagement Education activity, the YSC developed a new bi-lingual early literacy program for expectant and new families called “Hatchlings,” led a two-day Media Mentorship Forum, led a statewide book study on media mentorship, partnered with Pure Play Every Day to bring training to state youth service coordinators about the importance of play in the behavioral development of children, and led Project Ready with 50 youth services staff from around the state. Project Ready had a powerful impact on participants, who took this EDI training back to train other staff at their libraries. Training youth in media literacy skills has been a focus for the past five years, which the YSC believes to be one of the biggest areas of impact the program has had during this funding cycle. Sub-grants to systems ranged from outdoor Storywalks and “Mathplosion” programming to help middle and high school students succeed academically through virtual math classes linked to library e-resources and support materials, to the creation of the perpetual Maryland Day by Day Family Literacy Activity Calendar for preschoolers. One library director commented that, “Youth services continues to connect families to the library and to promote literacy and lifelong learning in the community. These programs and services would not be possible without LSTA funding.”

One Maryland One Book (OMOB) is Maryland's statewide community reading program, conducted annually since 2008. The Maryland Center for the Book, a program of Maryland Humanities, collaborates with partners to bring OMOB to urban, suburban, and rural communities throughout Maryland. Maryland Humanities staff coordinate book selection, distribution, and in-person or online public author tour events; and create and distribute reader's and teacher's guides, a marketing tool kit, and promotional materials. In the evaluators' stakeholder survey, 10% of respondents cited this program as one of the highest-impact LSTA-funded programs. According to OMOB staff, the reach of the program has remained strong over the years, typically with 20 (83%) or more of 24 jurisdictions participating. Staff capacity is the main issue for those few library systems who do not participate, as the program takes considerable time from library staff to manage. Small libraries in particular must focus

limited programming resources on children, rather than adults. The program is evaluated via a survey instrument that is distributed to libraries, who then distribute it to participants. This survey typically has a 30%+ response rate, with consistently high scores in response to questions about whether participants learned something new and whether they discussed the book with others. In a focus group, one director supplied the following comment about OMOB: “we greatly benefit from bringing in authors that our communities would never get to hear from directly otherwise. They bring interesting and new perspectives...It’s a great way to make connections across communities.”

Goal 3 Conclusion - Retrospective Question A-1

A-1. To what extent did MSLA's Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards Goal 3?

The evaluators conclude that Maryland State Library has ACHIEVED Goal 3. MSLA's YSC's work supporting statewide youth services staff and programs received overwhelming positive feedback from libraries around the state. From long standing and valuable programs such as Summer Reading, to innovative and impactful work around media mentorship for young people, programs are high use and high impact. The longstanding OMOB program continues to be a success, engaging over 80% of library jurisdictions in annual community reading programs with positive demonstrated outcomes. The new Lifelong Learning program has found success with a mix of competitive sub-grants and statewide projects to support lifelong educational opportunities in both traditional and innovative ways: For example, the widely adopted Choose Civility program positioned libraries as catalysts to create effective dialogue in their communities and the Prison Library Collection Development project forged new partnerships with the prison library community. Competitive sub-grants included topics as diverse as nutritional literacy; cognitive health for the elderly, mobile makerspaces; equity, diversity, and inclusion programming; and rural collection development initiatives.

Goal 4 Retrospective Assessment

GOAL 4: The Maryland State Library will help libraries foster economic and employment development opportunities in order to facilitate job growth in Maryland.

Goal 4 Description and Discussion

While none of the projects and expenditures associated with LSTA funding in FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 are reported in association with the statewide initiative to foster economic and employment development opportunities for citizens, several activities under other statewide initiatives support Goal 4.

Goal 4 Projects & Expenditures

Goal 4 expenditures represent 0% of Maryland's total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period. The main work that the agency has done to support workforce development across libraries is to coordinate efforts across systems. These efforts require time from PLSNB staff

who are LSTA-funded, and involve working closely with the State Library Resource Center (SLRC), which conducts statewide work on behalf of libraries around workforce development. The SLRC was established in 1971 to “provide and expand access to specialized library materials and services that are necessary for coordinated, efficient, and economical library services,”¹² and the Annotated Code of Maryland designates the Central Library of the Enoch Pratt Free Library (EPFL) as the SLRC. Under a Memorandum of Understanding, the MSLA contracts with EPFL to manage and provide SLRC services to all libraries and residents of Maryland. The state funding for SLRC goes through MSLA and is a major component of LSTA matching funds. While not funded by LSTA, the SLRC’s efforts in this area are related to LSTA, and certainly related to the MSLA. Employment development initiatives in which the SLRC was heavily involved over the past few years include the Entrepreneurship Academy, participation in both the Governor’s Interagency Council on Homelessness Workforce Development Sub-Committee, and review and revision of Maryland’s new Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). At a high level, SLRC participation and efforts around the Interagency Council and WIOA help educate non-library agencies around the state about the services and benefits provided by libraries; in essence, this work provides a leg up to any library that may approach potential local partners to build collaborations where services are shared. Now in its sixth year, the Entrepreneurship Academy is a 7-week free training course that walks participants through the process of developing a sustainable small business. Pre- and post- surveys show continuously high outcomes for participants in the program. Due to its great success, SLRC created an Academic toolkit that can be used by libraries around the state to run their own Academy, which two library systems have undertaken. SLRC recently released a version of the Academy that will soon be used for inmates in the prison system, where there is no internet access to participate in online classes.

In terms of the work that MSLA staff have participated in more directly, in this cycle MSLA staff surveyed library systems to understand current workforce development programs and future needs and then created an MSLA-led Community of Practice around Workforce Development to share resources and best practices, including micro certification. MSLA provided statewide access to databases to enhance workforce development skills, such as the purchase of Gale OneFile in FFY 2020, through SLRC, to provide new employment and entrepreneurial resources statewide. This has proved popular, with use of the database doubling between FFY 2020 and FFY 2021. LSTA-funded staff worked with the Attorney General's Access to Justice Project to provide pro-bono resources around COVID-19 employment issues. They provided a "Learning for All" program and other national programs on workforce training to library staff to assist customers, and promoted “prison to public library” workforce opportunities among prison librarians and public library administrators.

Two expenditures related to Goal 4 include the Prison Library Collection Development initiative in FFY 2019 (discussed under Goal 3) and components of the TechEd in Maryland grant in both FFY 2019 and FFY 2020. The first project provided \$8,000 in new materials for each of 12 state prison libraries, and focuses of the collection development program included career development, entrepreneurial skills, and financial literacy. In FFY 2019, LSTA funded a project

¹² Annotated Code of Maryland, 1957, art. 777-168; 1978, ch. 22-2.

at Carroll County Public Library System to equip the Exploration Commons with tools and resources such as laser cutters, commercial-grade kitchen equipment and technology for training for those looking to learn new job skills to succeed in a changing workforce. The project also provided support for startups and businesses to develop innovative products and services. In FFY 2020, TechEd in Maryland supported the Make-IT Place STEM Repository at the Baltimore County Public Library, a virtual maker space with how-to videos, lesson plans, and activities to increase technology literacy. In FFY 2018, LSTA funds were provided to Washington County to participate in a Work Ready Community Initiative which helped library employees create workforce development programs and helped to educate staff on the programs already available in the community. This was categorized under Staff Development. Additionally, the Career Pathways project at the Baltimore County Public Library created a multi-year partnership with Junior Achievement to create a Junior Achievement BizTown for middle school children. In the mock community that was created, students had a chance to work in a library for a day and shadow librarians. This project was categorized under Youth Services.

While the project did not use LSTA funds, MSLA undertook a significant program over the past two years providing ARPA funds to library systems for the purchase of mobile vehicles and related equipment to provide workforce development services across the state.

In interviews, staff at the SLRC discussed the recent launch of libraries into employment development -- via work supported by both the SLRC and the MSLA -- as particularly significant. The fruits of these labors will likely be even more clear in the next evaluation cycle.

Goal 4 Conclusion - Retrospective Question A-1

A-1. To what extent did MSL's Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards Goal 4?

The evaluators conclude that MSLA has PARTIALLY ACHIEVED Goal 4. While authoring the 5-year plan, MSLA anticipated significant demand for funding for workforce development projects via competitive sub-grants. However, the need was not as high as expected. Nongrant proposals were received in this area, resulting in no direct expenditures attributed to this goal, which represented the second target project under Goal 4 in the 5-year plan. Two projects under Goal 3 had components relating to workforce development, though it was not a central focus. MSLA staff successfully partnered with other organizations to develop a Community of Practice around Workforce Development, meeting the third target project under Goal 4 in the 5-year plan.

Retrospective Assessment Questions A-2 and A-3

Retrospective Question A-2

A-2. To what extent did MSLA's Five-Year Plan activities achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?

MSLA's Five-Year Plan focuses heavily on the top four focal areas. Appendix F provides a detailed mapping to LSTA focal areas and intents on a project by project basis. The results achieved are in line with the national priorities associated with the Measuring Success framework and their corresponding intents.

The Measuring Success focal areas are: Lifelong Learning, Information Access, Institutional Capacity, Economic and Employment Development, Civic Engagement, and Human Services. Four of the six goals map directly to goals in the LSTA Five-Year Plan. Those that do not -- Human Services and Civic Engagement -- were addressed through various projects and programming.

Three projects undertaken in support of Goal 1 address the focal area of Institutional Capacity (Staff Development, Library Development, and Infrastructure). Three projects undertaken in support of Goal 2 address the focal area of Information Access (Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access; Maryland AskUsNow!, and Statewide Statistics and Data Innovation). Three projects undertaken in support of Goal 3 address the focal area of Lifelong Learning (Lifelong Learning, Youth Services in Maryland Libraries, and One Maryland One Book). The Library Development project under Goal 1, as well as components of two activities (the *Prison Library Collection Development* project and *TechEd in Maryland*) addressed the focal area of Economic and Employment Development. Activities under all three projects undertaken in support of Goal 3 addressed the focal area of Civic Engagement, such as the statewide *Choose Civility* program in FFY 2018. Activities under Goal 3's Youth Services in Maryland Libraries project and Goal 1's Library Development project address the focal area of Human Resources, such as the Financial Management Certification program made available under *Maryland eLearning*.

Retrospective Question A-3

A-3. Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for MSLA's Five-Year Plan activities? (Yes/No)

Only one project reached the 10% expenditure threshold identified by IMLS as representing a substantial focus on a specific identified group. *Staff Development* accounted for 28.86% of total expenditures during the evaluation period, representing the *library workforce*. However, this does not mean that many of the target audiences did not significantly benefit from the efforts supported with LSTA funding. Expenditures under Goal 2's *Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access* project and Goal 3's *Youth Services* and *Lifelong Learning* project directly benefited *Families, Children, School-Aged Youths, and Individuals With Disabilities*. Furthermore, the evaluators were able to identify individual subgrants that were awarded during the period covered by this assessment that indirectly benefited other audiences identified by IMLS.

GROUP	YES/NO
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Library workforce (current and future)	YES
Individuals living below the poverty line	NO
Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed	NO
Ethnic or minority populations	NO
Immigrants/refugees	NO
Individuals with disabilities	NO
Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills	NO
Families	NO
Children (aged 0-5)	NO
School-aged youth (aged 6-17)	NO

Process Questions B-1, B-2, and B-3

Process Question B-1

B-1. How has MSLA used any data from the State Program Report (SPR) and elsewhere (e.g., Public Libraries Survey) to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan?

The SPR allows MSLA to take a step back and look at the broader picture of how LSTA funds have been used, and more importantly, where there are "thin" areas in achieving the Strategic plan. MSLA has dedicated resources to enhance economic development support in the last year of this LSTA planning cycle FFY218-FFY2022 to address the issue.

Process Question B-2

B-2. Specify any modifications MSLA made to the Five-Year Plan. What was the reason for this change?

No modifications have been made.

Process Question B-3

B-3. How and with whom has MSLA shared data from the SPR and from other evaluation resources? How has MSLA used the last Five-Year Evaluation to inform data collected for

the new Five-Year Evaluation? How has MSLA used this information throughout this five-year cycle?

Data from the SPR has been parsed and shared with primary customers (public library administrators); used to promote LSTA programs to elected officials on Maryland Library Legislative Day and Annual Report shared with Trustees, Friends of the Libraries, and the general public. MSLA used the last evaluation to refine its methodology for information gathering to stay on track internally, and to assist in the evaluation for the pending evaluation.

Methodology Questions C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4

Methodology Question C-1

C-1. Identify how MSLA implemented an independent Five-Year Evaluation using the criteria described in the section of this guidance document called Selection of an Independent Evaluator.

To ensure rigorous and objective evaluation of MSLA's implementation of the LSTA Grants to States program, MSLA, in cooperation with eight other state library administrative agencies (SLAAs) in the northeast United States, participated in the issuance of a joint Request for Proposals (RFP) for a "Cooperative Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan Evaluation 2018-2022" through the Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE). The RFP was issued on June 14, 2021 with proposals due by July 12, 2021.

As a result of a competitive bidding process, QualityMetrics LLC, a library consulting firm headquartered in Silver Spring Maryland, was awarded the contract to conduct the independent LSTA evaluation. QualityMetrics LLC does not have a role in carrying out other LSTA-funded activities and is independent of those who are being evaluated or who might be favorably or adversely affected by the evaluation results.

QualityMetrics LLC has in-depth evaluation experience and demonstrated professional competency in conducting LSTA Grants to States evaluations. We proactively study and review the FFY 2018 and FFY 2019 projects and activities through the publicly available SPR interface when responding to an competitive RFP. QualityMetrics Director and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Martha Kyrillidou, carried out more than 20 such evaluations for the 2013-2017 cycle. In addition, QualityMetrics associate consultant, Bill Wilson, has been part of more than 50 LSTA evaluations in each five-year cycle since 2002 both as a partner in Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants and as a research consultant with QualityMetrics.

Principal consultant Dr. Martha Kyrillidou has deep experience in library evaluation over her 22 years of service at the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Dr. Kyrillidou has taught Research Methods and Assessment, and Evaluation courses at the University of Maryland and at Kent State University and has extensive practical experience in mixed methods, evaluation

and outcomes assessment. Martha is a current member of the Library Statistics Working Group (LSWG), chair of the NISO Z39.7 standard, and mentoring the next generation of public library staff and evaluators.

Ms. Chapman has over a decade of experience working in assessment and data analysis in academic, state, and consortial libraries. She worked as the Data Analysis & Communications Consultant and State Data Coordinator in the Library Development office of the State Library of North Carolina and has currently served for eight years as the Assessment Analyst & Consultant at Duke University Libraries.

Mr. Wilson has extensive experience with federal funding programs for libraries dating back to the 1970s and interactions with state library administrative agencies since he served as Wisconsin's State Librarian in the 1990s. Mr. Wilson has also completed extensive graduate/doctoral-level coursework in statistics and research methods.

Methodology Question C-2

C-2. Describe the types of statistical and qualitative methods (including administrative records) used in conducting the Five-Year Evaluation. Assess their validity and Reliability.

QualityMetrics, LLC deployed a mixed methods protocol for data collection that is multi-faceted and rigorous. Reviewing demographic data, quantitative Public Libraries Survey (PLS) data, and State Program Report (SPR) data formed the basis of our knowledge from the stage of responding to the RFP for an independent evaluator and throughout the evaluation process. Providing a cloud-based storage space for MSLA to deposit additional data and files and reflect on the program was the basis of our initial interaction. After conducting an initial Zoom conference call with representatives of the Maryland State Libraries at the beginning of the evaluation process and a second phone call to discuss the agencies self-reflection on whether goals have been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved, the evaluators stayed in regular touch (monthly sessions) with the agency as the evaluation team was gathering data. In addition to updating MSLA leadership on progress, the sessions were used to resolve emerging questions and to solicit additional relevant information. Data gathering included (a) interviews with agency staff members, (b) interviews with project managers for various SPR reported projects and activities, (c) focus group discussions with project teams, (d) focus group discussions with project and activity beneficiaries, (e) a broad based short survey for library staff and stakeholders with some knowledge and engagement with LSTA funded activities collecting primarily qualitative contextual information about past activities and future needs.

Researchers and evaluators across the globe are adjusting to the new realities that accompany the pandemic. The technical note below is merely an example.

COVID-19 presented special circumstances and a number of considerations had to be taken into account. The crisis brought the imperative of changing

how evaluation work is done and how we engage policymakers, programme managers and beneficiaries as restrictions on travel and ‘social distancing’ are expected to last.¹³

While no on-site visit to MSLA was conducted during this evaluation period, two of the primary investigators for QualityMetrics (Dr. Martha Kyrillidou and Mr. William Wilson) had visited the MSLA offices as part of the 2013-2017 LSTA evaluation cycle and on many other occasions. Consequently, the evaluators were somewhat familiar with MSLA’s operation. Virtual (Zoom) one-on-one interviews were held with the agency State Librarian and with key staff engaged in LSTA and in specific projects carried out under the LSTA Five-Year Plan. The Five-Year Evaluation is a summative assessment and as such the availability of the SPR data was extremely useful more so than other times.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 circumstances have strengthened the state library agency role -- during a time of crisis the profession and the communities were seeking advice and often turned to the state library for answers. Many SLAAs responded by holding frequent and regular statewide community meetings with various groups which elevated the importance of the LSTA activities even when they were disrupted by the pandemic. Creative solutions were identified in most instances as most programs had to turn into virtual delivery for most of the pandemic period. In some ways, the record of virtual programming is more evident and its impact more readily documented. However, we do run the danger of minimizing the adverse effects on marginalized communities which often are more difficult to reach during times of crisis such as COVID-19 presented.

The toll on the mental health of our communities has also been evident as these restrictions are establishing new norms for interacting in person. Monitoring community behaviors took place frequently during the pandemic often resulting in people feeling over-surveyed in many instances. This had an impact on the nature of the statewide web-based survey that was administered in that an extra effort was made to make it as short as was practical.

The web-based survey targeting the library community was conducted between September 13th and November 30th, 2021. The survey provided some supplementary quantitative information as well as considerable qualitative information. Additional corroborative evidence from comments collected in the survey served to triangulate the evidence gathered.

Validity and reliability analysis reflect a positivist worldview and in a qualitative naturalistic approach they are being redefined with some divergent views on whether and how one ensures

¹³ OECD/DAC and IEO/UNDP (2020) Guidance Note: Good practices during COVID-19; UNICEF Evaluation Office (2020) Technical Note: Response of the UNICEF Evaluation Function to the COVID-19 Crisis; WFP Office of Evaluation (2020) Technical Note for {Planning and Conducting Evaluations During COVID-19; UNFPA Evaluation Office (2020) Adapting evaluations to the COVID-19 pandemic; UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (2020) Event planning and implementation during COVID-19; ILO Evaluation Office (2020) Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO; FAO Office of Evaluations (2020) Risk analysis and guidance for the management and conduct of evaluations during international and national level COVID-19 crisis and restrictions.

quality and rigor in qualitative inquiry. The notion that naturalistic inquiry needs to exhibit quality, rigor, and trustworthiness is more widespread nowadays. The LSTA Evaluators' Community of Practice (COP) also provided another opportunity for evaluators working across multiple states to come together and enhance the protocols and frameworks used. QualityMetrics' evaluations actively contributed to the LSTA Evaluators' COP organized by IMLS.

The evaluators engaged in numerous conversations through Zoom and phone interviews. The quality and rigor of the phone interviews in the LSTA evaluation of MSLA's LSTA implementation has been enhanced by references to external website links, google maps, internal triangulation and, in some instances, by asking interviewees to allow the conversation to be recorded with assurances for confidentiality by the evaluators. Quality and rigor were also enhanced by having two evaluators attend most focus groups and interviews. Shared note-taking was available in real time through shared google documents and drive access. This approach has allowed evaluators to refine their inquiry and tailor it as knowledge of MSLA's LSTA program was accumulating from one interaction to the next. Recorded conversations also allow the evaluators to reflect and refine their interpretations in a reliable manner. The validity of the inquiry was strengthened with the informed selection of the subjects by the MSLA leadership team and staff.

Methodology Question C-3

C-3. Describe the stakeholders involved in the various stages of the Five-Year Evaluation. How did QualityMetrics -- in cooperation with MSLA -- engage them?

Numerous small-group virtual sessions and telephone interviews were conducted with librarians and other persons with knowledge of LSTA-funded initiatives in Maryland. The focus groups and interviews provided both qualitative evidence and context that supplemented a review of agency-supplied statistical data and information and data submitted in the form of the State Program Reports (SPRs).

Interviewees shared their knowledge of LSTA utilization, enhancing interactions and depth and quality of the conversations. Furthermore, principal investigators Martha Kyrillidou and Joyce Chapman conducted both separate and joint interviews and group sessions and shared and discussed their observations in order to develop a shared understanding of the meaning of the library experience in Maryland and how it was supported by MSLA with LSTA support. Both investigators participated in many of the agency interviews, allowing for the concept of triangulation to be implemented as evaluators debriefed and compared interpretations and understandings.

Methodology Question C-4

C-4. Discuss how MSLA will share the key findings and recommendations with others.

Data from the SPR will be parsed and shared with primary customers (public library administrators); used to promote LSTA programs to elected officials on Maryland Library Legislative Day and Annual Report shared with Trustees, friends and general public.

Conclusion

This evaluation would be remiss if it did not acknowledge the increased funding that the state agencies have received through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES) and the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). MSLA, like every other state agency, has been successful in disbursing these one-time additional sources of funding. Often with the same level of staff they had before, they successfully dispersed twice the amount of the LSTA funding as the annual funding stream was augmented with this one-time infusion of support. A big thank you to all parties involved for helping our communities and libraries thrive during the unprecedented times of COVID-19.

Per guidance provided by IMLS, we have not examined the impact of these additional funds; the reason is that it is important to allow for the ability to have continuity of comparability in the five year evaluations as the long term standing funding formula of LSTA is the traditional population based formula. Yet, we want to acknowledge the existence of these funds and the many additional projects and activities they supported in the hopes that a look at these activities will indeed provide a fuller and more accurate picture of what happened during the FFY 2018 - FFY 2022 LSTA Evaluation period.

In conclusion, it is fitting to highlight the findings of the recent *Statewide Public Opinion Poll* that showed that Maryland public libraries continue to be very highly regarded by the public. Respondents are aware of current library services, particularly Internet access. They find the library to be a good investment of tax dollars and an essential service that provides the resources they want and need. Respondents also emphasize the need for the state to invest more in public libraries.¹⁴

¹⁴ "2021 Annual Report," Maryland State Library.
<https://www.marylandlibraries.org/Documents/Annual%20Report%202021.pdf>

Library Services and Technology Act Funding Distributed:



International Symbol of Libraries

\$2M+ in federal LSTA funds distributed to libraries to support staff development, e-book collections, EDI initiatives, technology and WiFi hotspot lending, and more.

\$546,279 in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) funding to support community Internet connectivity, remote learning, and the creation of healthy and safe spaces.

\$3,294,669 in American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) funds to provide enhancements to programming, services and collections across Maryland libraries.

¹⁵ “2021 Annual Report,” Maryland State Library.
<https://www.marylandlibraries.org/Documents/Annual%20Report%202021.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Acronyms

ACS - American Community Survey
ARL - Association of Research Libraries
ARPA - American Recovery Plan Act
AUN! - Maryland AskUsNow!
BARD - Braille and Audio Reading Download
COP - Community of Practice
CARES - Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act
COSLINE - Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast
CSLP - Cooperative Summer Library Program
DPLA - Digital Public Library of America
EDI - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
EISi - Elementary/Secondary Information System
EPFL - Enoch Pratt Free Library
E-Rate - Federal program that provides discounts to help eligible schools and libraries in the United States obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access
FFY - Federal Fiscal Year
FTE - Full Time Equivalent
ILS - Integrated Library System
IMLS - Institute of Museum and Library Services
LATI - Library Associate Training Institute
LGBTQ+ - Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (or questioning), and others
LSTA - Library Services and Technology Act
LSWG - Library Statistics Working Group
MAPLA - Maryland Public Library Administrators
MAT - Maryland Accessible Textbook
MLA - Maryland Library Association
MSLA- Maryland State Library Agency
NAAL - National Assessment of Adult Literacy
NCES - National Center for Educational Statistics
OBE - Outcome-Based Evaluation
OCLC - Online Computer Library Center
OMOB - One Maryland One Book
OPAC - online public access catalog
PLS - Public Library Survey
PLSNB - Public Library and State Networking Branch
POP - Patron Outreach Project

RFP - Request for Proposals
ROI - return-on-investment
SLAA - State Library Administrative Agency
SLRC - State Library Resource Center
SPR - State Program Report
SRAC - Summer Reading Advisory Council
SRP - Summer Reading Program
STEAM - Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics
STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math
T3 - YALSA Transforming Teen Topics
WIOA - Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act
YALSA - Young Adult Library Services Association
YSC - Youth Services Coordinator

Appendix B: Interviewees/ Focus Groups

Interviewees

1. Irene Padilla, State Librarian, MSLA
2. Carrie Sanders, Youth Services Consultant, MSLA
3. Tamar Sarnoff, Public Library and State Networking Director, MSLA
4. Nini Beegan, Organizational Learning & Innovation, MSLA
5. Yana Demireva, Research & Evaluation Coordinator, MSLA
6. Mary Rayme, LSTA Grants Coordinator, MSLA
7. Brian Butler, Professor and Senior Associate Dean, University of Maryland iSchool
8. Laura Hicks, Educational Specialist, School Library Media, Maryland State Department of Education
9. Paul Chasen, Virtual Reference Coordinator, Enoch Pratt Free Library
10. Andrea Lewis, Director of Programs, Maryland Humanities
11. Colin Khem, Business Analytics Manager, Prince George's County Memorial Library
12. Sharan Marshall, Chair of the Maryland State Library Board¹⁶
13. Wesley Wilson, Chief at Enoch Pratt Free Library / State Library Resource Center

Focus groups

1. Maryland Library Association (MLA)
 - a. Five attendees
2. Maryland Public Library Administrators (MAPLA)
 - a. Session I: Six attendees
 - b. Session II: Five attendees
 - c. Session III: Two attendees
3. Summer Reading Advisory Council (SRAC)
4. Tableau User Group, Lunch n Learn

¹⁶ The Maryland State Library Board is the successor to the Maryland Advisory Council on Libraries.

Appendix C: Bibliography of Documents Reviewed

State Agency Sources

- SPR data (FFY 2018-2020)
- “Sunsetting Ask Us Now” memo FFY 2019
- eGMS screenshots
- Public Library Surveys
- Annual reports to the governor (FFY 2018 - FFY 2021)
- Statewide Statistics and Innovation, sample charts and graphs from Tableau dashboards
- FFY 2019 and FFY 2020 Summer Reading Infographics
- Maryland Laws Relating to Public Libraries
- Entrepreneur Academy Toolkit
- SLRC Dashboard FFY20 Q4

Federal Agency Data Sources

- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [State Program Report \(SPR\) report](#)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [Public Library Statistics](#)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [State Profiles](#)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services [“Grants to States” Conference](#)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [State Library Administrative Agency Survey](#)
- National Center for Education Statistics, [Academic Libraries](#)
- National Center for Education Statistics, [Elementary and Secondary Information System](#)
- United States Census Bureau, [Decennial Census](#) (April 1, 2020)

Evaluation Resources and COVID-19

- OECD/DAC and IEO/UNDP (2020) [Guidance Note: Good practices during COVID-19.](#)
- UNICEF Evaluation Office (2020) [Technical Note: Response of the UNICEF Evaluation Function to the COVID-19 Crisis.](#)
- WFP Office of Evaluation (2020) [Technical Note for Planning and Conducting Evaluations During COVID-19.](#)
- UNFPA Evaluation Office (2020) [Adapting evaluations to the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)
- UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (2020) [Event planning and implementation during COVID-19.](#)
- ILO Evaluation Office (2020) [Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO.](#)
- FAO Office of Evaluations (2020) [Risk analysis and guidance for the management and conduct of evaluations during international and national level COVID-19 crisis and restrictions.](#)

Other Resources

- Ethel Himmel and William J. Wilson. The Functions and Roles of State Library Agencies. American Library Association, Chicago, 2000.

- The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. [Functions and Roles of State Libraries: 2000 and 2020](#). Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services. (2021). [The Use and Cost of Public Library Materials: Trends Before the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). Washington, DC: The Institute.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. [Understanding the Social Wellbeing Impacts of the Nation's Libraries and Museums](#). 2021 Report. Washington DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. [Functions and Roles of State Libraries: 2000 and 2020](#). Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- Measures that Matter: [Workforce Development Literature Review](#), January 12, 2021.
- Pelczar, M., Frehill, L. M., Nielsen, E, Kaiser, A., Hudson, J., & Wan, T. (2021). [Characteristics of Public Libraries in the United States: Results from the FY 2019 Public Libraries Survey](#). Institute of Museum and Library Services: Washington, D.C. Results from the SDC E-Resources Survey (received January 2022).
- Sarah Mervosh, "[The pandemic hurt these students the most.](#)" In print "Pandemic widened U.S. Educational Gap into a Gulf, Research Suggests." *New York Times*, July 28, 2021, Section A, Page 13.
- The School Librarian Investigation: Decline or Evolution? <https://libslide.org/>

Appendix D: Focus Group and Interview Questions

Focus groups

General Questions

1. What stands out as being the most effective use of LSTA in Maryland over the last three years?
2. Are there specific examples of projects that you think were the most impactful on the lives of the citizens of Maryland?
3. Are there specific changes in how LSTA funds should be expended in the future? Are there new or emerging needs that are unmet that need to be addressed?

Potential Follow-up Questions

1. What type of programs work for library patrons and staff, in general?
2. What type of programs work for public library patrons, school and academic library clientele, and library staff specifically?
3. What do non-participating libraries and borderline participants need to be able to participate in, grant funded projects or statewide programs?
4. How will the library patrons and library staff be satisfied with the delivery of services?
5. What programs will result in cost savings for participating libraries?

Outcome Questions

1. Will more patrons use the library services because of the grant programs?
2. Will there be an increase in community involvement in relation to the grant programs?
3. Will customer service improve due to staff training from LSTA funded events?
4. Will the statewide programs enhance libraries' abilities to serve patrons?

Interview guidelines

1. Introductions (include that you are working for QualityMetrics, a library consulting firm headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, established in 2016). Ask them to tell you a bit about themselves.
2. Ask about their familiarity with the LSTA program. If they are unfamiliar you can provide some or all of the below info -
 - a. *The Library Services and Technology Act's (LSTA) "Grants to States" program is the single largest source of ongoing federal funding for libraries. Many states spend funds on a combination of statewide initiatives and on subgrants awarded to individual libraries to enable them to launch innovative efforts or to extend services to populations that are difficult to reach.*
 - b. *The LSTA program requires that each state conduct an evaluation of its LSTA program every five years. These evaluations are overseen by the Institute of*

Museum and Library Services but are conducted by independent evaluators. QualityMetrics was selected to conduct the state-level evaluations for nine states in the Northeast and our company is also working with more than a dozen additional states and territories. The results of our review are due to be submitted to IMLS in March of 2022.

3. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT WORK FOR THE SLAA (who manage a project):
 - a. Ask them to talk about the particular grant/s they worked with. Allow them to lead the conversation in an exploratory fashion. Ask follow up questions.
 - b. Identify where there are materials or data from their projects that it would be useful for us to see.
4. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT WORK FOR THE SLAA (high level stakeholder):
 - a. Go through the plan goal by goal, remind them of the goal wording and the percent of funds the state spent on it, get their reflections on progress toward each goal.
 - b. Are there any future needs we should be emphasizing in the evaluation?
5. FOR SLAA STAFF on specific projects:
 - a. Ask them to talk about the particular programs they are responsible for
 - b. Let them know the data available (SPR, output, etc.) and verify that there is no other data or materials they have that would be helpful to us. If they only listed outputs in the SPR outcomes data, ask about plans for outcome data in the future.
 - c. What do you see as the needs moving forward for the next seven years?
6. ALL: What impact have you seen LSTA dollars have on your state?
7. ALL: Is there anything you think we should have asked that we didn't?

Appendix E: Web-Survey Instrument

Maryland LSTA Survey 2021

WELCOME

Every five years, each state library administrative agency in the nation is required to conduct an independent evaluation of its implementation of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) "Grants to States" program. This evaluation must be submitted in order to qualify for ongoing Federal funding. We'd like your help in assessing the impact of the LSTA program on your library and on the people that your library serves.

You are invited to share your thoughts and ideas by answering three short questions. The survey should take you no more than ten minutes to complete. The first question asks you to look back over the last few years and to consider how the LSTA program has benefited libraries and library users. Second, we'd like to invite you to think about the future and to suggest new ways in which you think LSTA funds should be invested. Finally, we want to give you an opportunity to offer any other observations about Maryland's LSTA program (positive or negative).

Thank you in advance for helping the Maryland State Library serve your community better!

BACKGROUND

Maryland receives approximately \$2.9 million in LSTA Grants to States funding each year. The largest portion of this funding (about 61%) has been allocated to support of Institutional Capacity, with programs such as staff development, infrastructure, and library development.

The second largest portion (20%) supports Information Access, with programs such as statewide statistics and data innovation; digital learning, literacy, and access; and Maryland AskUsNow!.

The last portion (18%) of the budget supports Lifelong Learning, with programs such as One Maryland One Book, Youth Services in Maryland libraries, and lifelong learning.

LSTA dollars are used to supplement state and local funds and to foster creativity and innovation in meeting the needs of Maryland's existing and potential library users and citizens.

LOOKING BACK

The period we are evaluating is 2018-2022. Think back over the past few years (2018 on). Which, if any, of the LSTA-supported programs mentioned on the last page have had the

greatest impact on your library and on the people your library serves? How is library service in your community better because of the investment of LSTA funds?

LOOKING FORWARD

2) Soon we will be writing our next LSTA Five Year Plan. Look ahead to 2023 - 2027. Are there changes in the way that LSTA dollars are invested that you think would significantly improve library services in Maryland? If so, what are they and why do you think that the change(s) would make a difference. (Note that LSTA funding cannot be used for building facilities or for lobbying purposes.)

OTHER COMMENTS

3) Please feel free to offer any additional comments about Maryland's LSTA program. What do you like or dislike about the program? What could be improved? (Note that your responses are confidential and comments will not be identified with an individual or with a specific library.)

OPTIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

4) The library that I represent is:

A public library

A school library

- An academic library
- A special library
- Other (Please specify below.)

If you responded "Other" to the question above, please specify the type of library you represent in the text box provided below.

5) Choose the role that best represents the majority of your work:

- Director
- Manager or Department Head
- Youth Services staff
- Adult Services staff
- Technical Services staff
- Circulation/ILL staff
- Technology Specialist
- Library Trustee
- Other (Please specify below.)

If you responded "Other" to the question above, please specify your role in the library you represent in the text box provided below.

Thank You!

Appendix F: Measuring Success Crosswalk Table

MARYLAND Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents									
	1.1 Staff Development	1.2 Library Development	1.3 Infrastructure	2.1 Digital Learning	2.2 Maryland Literacy, and Access	2.3 Statewide AskUsNow!	3.1 Lifelong Learning	3.2 Youth Services and Data Innovation	3.3 One Maryland One Book
Lifelong Learning				YES			YES	YES	YES
Improve users' formal education							YES		
Improve users' general knowledge and skills				YES			YES	YES	YES
Information Access				YES	YES	YES	YES		
Improve users' ability to discover information resources				YES	YES				
Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources				YES	YES	YES	YES		
Institutional Capacity	YES	YES	YES	YES		YES		YES	
Improve the library workforce	YES	YES						YES	
Improve the library's physical and technological infrastructure		YES	YES	YES					
Improve library operations	YES	YES	YES			YES			
Economic & Employment Development		YES							
Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support		YES							
Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources		YES							
Human Resources							YES		
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family or household finances							YES		
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health & wellness							YES		
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills							YES		
Civic Engagement							YES	YES	YES
Improve users' ability to participate in their community							YES	YES	
Improve users' ability to participate in community conversations around topics of concern							YES	YES	YES

Appendix G: Targeted Audiences Crosswalk Table

MARYLAND Target Population Served												
	Library Workforce (current and future)	Individuals Living Below the Poverty Line	Individuals who are unemployed/underemployed	Ethnic or Minority Populations	Immigrants/Refugees	Individuals with Disabilities or Information Skills	Families	Children (aged 0-5)	School-aged Youth (aged 6-17)	General (aged 18-64)	Senior (aged 65+)	
1.1 Staff Development	YES											
1.2 Library Development	YES											
1.3 Infrastructure								YES	YES	YES	YES	
2.1 Digital Learning, Literacy, & Access												
2.2 Maryland AskUsNow!												
2.3 Statewide Statistics & Data Innovation	YES											
3.1 Lifelong Learning					YES			YES	YES	YES	YES	
3.2 Youth Services in Maryland Libraries	YES						YES	YES	YES	YES		
3.3 One Maryland One Book												

Appendix H: Expenditure Tables

MARYLAND LSTA PROJECT EXPENDITURE SUMMARY											
	State Goal Short Title	PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2018 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2019 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2020 LSTA EXPENDITURE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE WITHIN GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LSTA EXPENDITURES
Goal 1	Institutional Capacity	Staff Development	X	X	X	\$ 900,311.55	\$ 681,565.92	\$ 933,522.22	\$ 2,515,399.69	45.96%	27.70%
		Library Development	X	X	X	\$ 524,952.85	\$ 775,188.93	\$ 864,145.40	\$ 2,164,287.18	39.54%	23.84%
		Infrastructure	X	X	X	\$ 326,666.10	\$ 322,245.21	\$ 144,490.00	\$ 793,401.31	14.50%	8.74%
		GOAL SUB-TOTAL				\$1,751,930.50	\$1,779,000.06	\$1,942,157.62	\$ 5,473,088.18	100.00%	60.28%
	State Goal Short Title	PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2018 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2019 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2020 LSTA EXPENDITURE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE WITHIN GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LSTA EXPENDITURES
Goal 2	Access to Information	Digital Learning, Literacy, and Access	X	X	X	\$ 260,985.13	\$ 296,433.06	\$ 357,641.00	\$ 915,059.19	53.57%	10.08%
		Maryland AskUsNow!	X	X		\$ 176,000.00	\$ 166,974.00	\$ -	\$ 342,974.00	20.08%	3.78%
		Statewide Statistics and Data Innovation	X	X	X	\$ 126,274.50	\$ 147,454.20	\$ 176,435.00	\$ 450,163.70	26.35%	4.96%
		GOAL SUB-TOTAL				\$ 563,259.63	\$ 610,861.26	\$ 534,076.00	\$ 1,708,196.89	100.00%	18.81%
	State Goal Short Title	PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2018 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2019 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2020 LSTA EXPENDITURE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE WITHIN GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LSTA EXPENDITURES
Goal 3	Lifelong Learning	Lifelong Learning	X	X	X	\$ 302,081.69	\$ 161,902.61	\$ 193,365.00	\$ 657,349.30	42.82%	7.24%
		Youth Services in Maryland Libraries	X	X	X	\$ 157,537.19	\$ 217,284.23	\$ 187,141.38	\$ 561,962.80	36.61%	6.19%
		One Maryland One Book	X	X	X	\$ 83,255.95	\$ 116,300.00	\$ 116,300.00	\$ 315,855.95	20.57%	3.48%
		GOAL SUB-TOTAL				\$ 542,874.83	\$ 495,486.84	\$ 496,806.38	\$ 1,535,168.05	100.00%	16.91%
	State Goal Short Title	PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2018 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2019 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2020 LSTA EXPENDITURE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE WITHIN GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LSTA EXPENDITURES
Goal 4	Employment & Economic Development					\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%
		GOAL SUB-TOTAL				\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	0.00%	0.00%
		LSTA PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION				\$ 119,086.04	\$ 120,222.84	\$ 123,877.00	\$ 363,185.88	100.00%	4.00%
		GRAND TOTAL				\$2,977,151.00	\$3,005,571.00	\$3,096,917.00	\$ 9,079,639.00	100.00%	100.00%
		LSTA ALLOCATION				\$2,977,151.00	\$3,005,571.00	\$3,096,917.00			

Appendix I: Web-Survey Report

LSTA Five-Year Evaluation -- Library Stakeholder Survey

As part of the 2018-2022 LSTA Five Year Plan evaluation process, the Maryland State Library (MSL) worked with independent evaluators to distribute a survey to library stakeholders. The survey was built in Alchemer survey software and distributed by MSLA staff via relevant listservs. The survey ran from September 13th through November 30th. The goals of the survey were to assess the impact of the funds provided by the LSTA program on the libraries of Maryland, and to additionally inform the library's 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan for LSTA funds. The survey asked respondents to look back over the last few years and to consider how expenditures within the LSTA program have benefited libraries and library users, to think about the future and to suggest changes to the ways in which LSTA funds should be invested, and provided the opportunity for respondents to offer any other observations about the MSL's LSTA program. The four goals of the current Five Year LSTA Plan were shared with respondents in the survey's introduction (Institutional Capacity, Access to Information, Lifelong Learning, and Employment & Economic Development).

Findings

The survey received 21 responses, 18 of which provided demographic information. As shown in Figure 1, 94% (17) of 21 respondents identify as working in public libraries and 6% (1) work in a regional public library. Figure 2 shows that 78% of respondents (17) were library directors and an additional. All but one respondent who identified their demographics worked in management; one worked in Adult Services.

Figure 1. The type of library in which respondents work

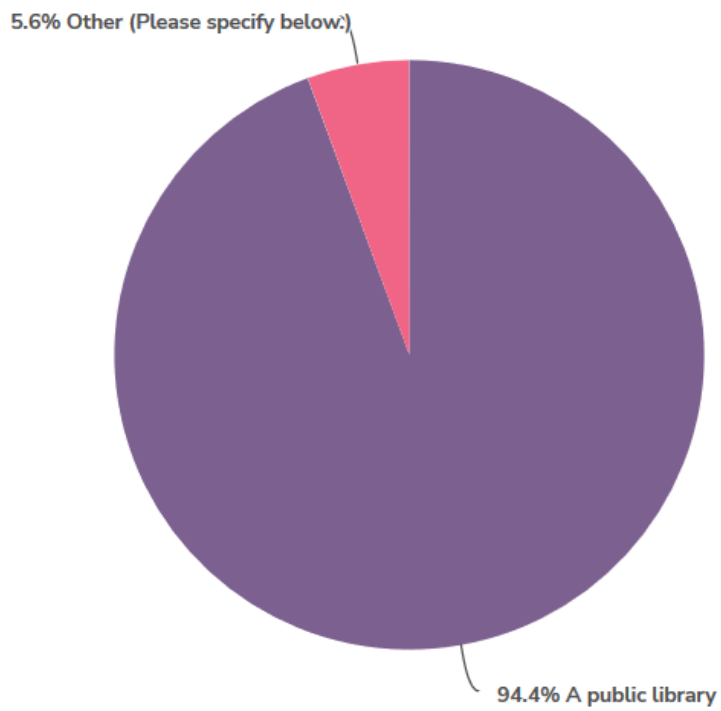
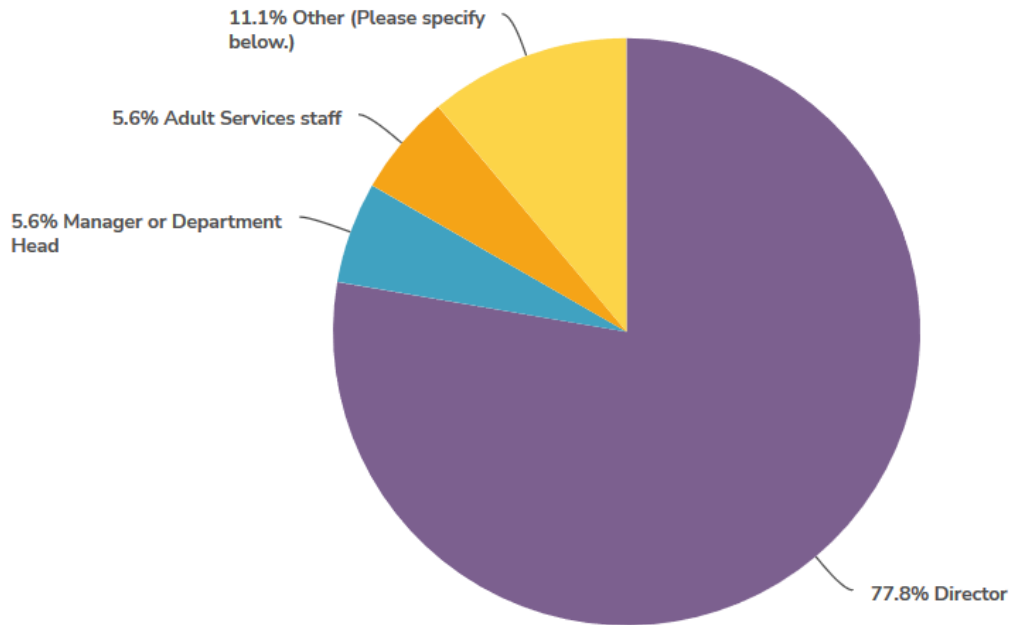
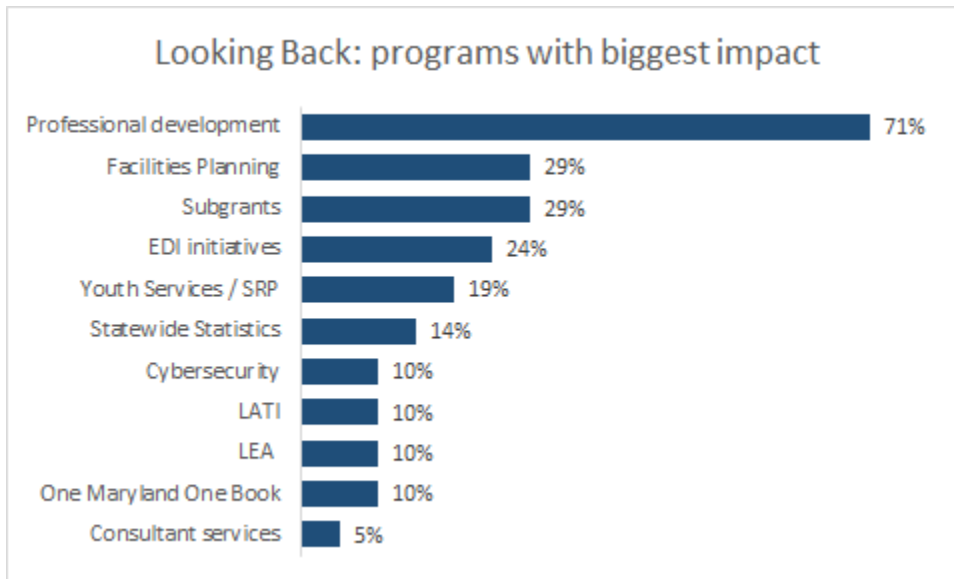


Figure 2. Role of respondent within their library



Looking back

The first question asked respondents to think back over the past three years and discuss which of LSTA-supported programs had the greatest impact on the library and the people the library serves. We received 21 responses to this question. Responses were coded to identify the frequency with which respondents discussed various programs, and the results are shown in the chart below. The area most frequently discussed as high-impact was professional development, with over two-thirds of respondents praising this use of funds. Several additionally highlighted LATI. As expected, subgrants are a category that many directors are aware of, but within the subgrants Facilities Planning stood out as a service that was lauded numerous times for the impact it has on libraries.



Several respondents discussed existing inequalities in resources between urban and rural libraries, and the desire to see LSTA funding take this into account with the distribution of funds.

Some quotes from question one are included below.

“The staff development grants have been invaluable in enabling staff in rural libraries to attend state and national conferences. So many ideas are gleaned at these conferences and connections made that rural libraries would be at a real disadvantage if staff could not attend.”

“The Institutional Capacity and Information Access funding has been the most significant in terms of long-term systemic advancement for our library, ranging from training for race and social equity to adding consultant support for digital equity programs and services. The statewide statistics and data innovation work has been hugely transformative for [our library].”

“We received a competitive LSTA grant to create a Library Space Utilization Study. This Study became our current Facility Master Plan which we needed to apply for State library capital grant funds...to renovate our [library]. This will help us improve the library space to meet our customers' current and future needs.”

“LSTA funding has helped us with staff development opportunities we could never have otherwise afforded.”

“The Library Associate Training Institute (LATI) has been invaluable in training new bachelor-level library staff for work in the public library.”

“Developing library leadership with training provided by LSTA funds has made Maryland libraries better and has allowed [us] to grow our next generation of managers from within our system.”

Looking forward

Respondents were asked to think ahead to the years covered by the upcoming Five-Year Plan (fiscal years 2023 - 2027) and discuss changes in the way that LSTA dollars are invested that would significantly improve library services. We received 18 responses to this question. Several comments focused on the idea of charging a statewide group to develop ideas for future LSTA expenditures that would be of highest impact and need to the library community.

“I would like to see a more collaborative process when it comes to deciding what LSTA funds will be spent on...I think the MAPLA Directors group is a good group to provide feedback and suggestions.”

“It might be interesting and useful to convene a group to answer this question about what kinds of grants or grant allocation would significantly impact library services. What does equity mean in the context of LSTA grants?”

Multiple comments requested more information or transparency about how funds are spent, including both subgrants and statewide projects.

“While we're provided the areas of investment, specific information on how the dollars were used is not as readily available. How much funding was allocated, where, and why? Which systems did what with their funding? What were the outcomes and impact? What change came about or will come about? That information is not shared (or I'm not aware of how to access it). An annual means of showcasing it would be appreciated...or an ideas book...Libraries spend a good deal of time creating innovative, impactful programs and initiatives. It would be nice to...leverage this by providing enhanced opportunities for systems to replicate/tweak

these in their own communities (without it having to be a statewide grant opportunity). The ability to juxtapose this info against key state and local issues/concerns/needs would help all to be more intentional and collaborative, and support a path to greater outcomes and deeper impact.”

Other ideas included: statewide Zoom licenses for each library system, the ability to use funds for digitization centers, more ILS unity and funding for Palace and OpenLibrary initiatives, funding for strategic planning, replication of the “Better Reference = Better Communication” statewide project, and continuing to fund digital content.

Other comments

Finally, respondents were provided with a free text field in which to provide any additional comments. We received 16 responses to this question, 63% of which were simply praise for the MSL’s LSTA program. One response said the new grants portal is “very easy to use, and the process is great,” and there was another request for a public webpage with details on the LSTA-funded projects and subgrants. Several more comments are included below.

“The reality is that some of our more rural areas need the funding so much more than some of our other systems who have larger population bases. I would like to see a more equitable distribution of money, if possible, to those systems that have the need.”

“Transparency could be improved, along with ongoing engagement and conversations about the program and its impacts/potential impacts.”

“I appreciate the funding opportunities, both for individual systems and for statewide projects. When we can work statewide to train and learn from each other, our programs are stronger with wider impact.”

Appendix J: Memorandum - Sunsetting Ask Us Now!

Sunsetting Ask Us Now!

Effective June 30, 2019, Ask Us Now! (AUN!) will no longer be available. This decision was not made lightly. Since it was originally created, changes in technology have led to changes in how customers interact with information. The Maryland State Library (MSL) evaluated the service, looking at historical trends over time both within Maryland and across the nation. A survey of Public Library staff involved with AUN! was conducted, and a task force consisting of public and academic library staff was convened.

An evaluation of the service in 2013 indicated that there was still sufficient demand to continue the service. Since that time, sessions requested to AUN! dropped 39% from 23,224 (calendar year 2014) to 14,194 (calendar year 2019 - projected). During this same period, sessions accepted by AUN! dropped 33% from 13,351 (in calendar year 2014) to 8,976 (calendar year 2019 - projected), and the cost per question has increased by more than 50% (conservatively, \$13.00 in 2014 and \$19.61 in 2019 (projected)). Questions answered by the 13 Academic and special Libraries that participate in AUN! has also dropped. Between FY16 and FY17 (the only years the data was available), academic libraries dropped by 45% (from 7,192 to 3,933), a far greater decrease than the 20% decrease by public libraries.

Fewer than ten states nationwide provide any service like Ask Us Now!, and most of them are not 24/7.

Across the state, the 18 public library systems that participated in AUN! answered 83% of all AUN! questions in FY17 (again, the only years that data was available). A survey of public library staff, representing 17 systems, indicated that while 53% of participants felt that AUN! meets a customer need, 65% felt that sunsetting AUN! would not negatively impact systems ability to provide service to customers. 53% of participants indicated that they intended to either reduce the number of hours they participate in AUN! or discontinue service entirely. In fact, since the survey was finished, two of the largest providers of AUN! staffing time (accounting for 13% of all answers) have dropped out of the program. 88% reported that staffing AUN! was the biggest challenge to providing AUN!. When questioned, public library staff indicated that they would likely employ telephone, system-level chat or email as a way to meet the needs of customers.

In open ended-comments, many responses indicated that overnight service was not needed, and that many questions handled by AUN! were either system specific (account information) or required in-person interaction (computer training), and were not aligned with what AUN! is designed to do. When asked about what could be done, a few respondents indicated that they thought a centralized reference service, run out of the State Library Resource Center (SLRC) could be a solution. This recommendation is not feasible. SLRC does not have the capacity to staff such a service, and the costs associated with having sufficient staffing levels exceed available funding.

The taskforce included members of the public library community and a representative from the academic library community. The task force was unanimous in believing that the current model for providing service did not align with current customer needs. The public library representatives agreed that given the amount of resources needed at the local level, it was difficult to justify continuation of the service. The representative from the academic community was looking to expand an AUN! like service for their customers.

As we sunset AUN!, SLRC will work with partner libraries to:

- Coordinate the sun setting timeline and communicate that to partner/liaison libraries once the announcement is made
- Work to assure all libraries who are using the qwidget on their web page make certain that is removed by the close of the fiscal year
- Continue to provide reference support for AUN! though it is not staffed to cover the entire state if partner/liaison libraries discontinue their participation before the close of the fiscal year.
- Create a sun setting script for customers using AUN! approved by all parties

MSL is grateful to the library staff and administrators that have supported AUN!, and we are especially grateful to SLRC for their management and administration of this project. We look forward to working with you all to identify new and innovative ways to support Maryland's library community.