
Minnesota Department of Education State Library Services

Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan Evaluation
March 29, 2022

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary	v
Introduction and purpose of evaluation.....	v
Background and methods.....	v
Findings and recommendations	vi
A-1: Progress on goals	vi
A-2: Measures of Success—Focal Areas and Intent.....	ix
A-3: Substantial groups	ix
B: Process questions and C: Methodology questions	x
Introduction	1
Background	1
Evaluation overview.....	2
Evaluation background	2
Evaluation plan	2
Evaluation report	3
A. Retrospective questions	3
A-1. Progress on goals	3
A-2. Measures of Success: Focal Areas and Intent.....	19
A-3. Substantial groups.....	22
B. Process questions	23
B-1. Use of SPR data to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan	23
B-2. Changes made to the Five-Year Plan.....	23
B-3. Sharing SPR data and evaluation resources.....	24
C. Methodology	24
C-1: Implementation of an independent five-year evaluation.....	24
C-2: Types of statistical and qualitative methods used in conducting the five-year evaluation.....	24
C-3: Description and engagement of stakeholders in five-year evaluation	25
C-4: Sharing of key findings and recommendations.....	25
Appendix A: List of Acronyms and Terms	26
Acronyms	26

General definitions and Minnesota-specific definitions..... 26

Appendix B: List of people interviewed.....27

Appendix C: Documents reviewed and financial information.....28

Appendix D: Research instruments for focus groups, survey, and group interviews.....32

LSTA evaluation focus group questions..... 32

LSTA evaluation group interview questions 33

State Library Services interview guide 33

Minitex interview guide..... 34

Minnesota Braille and Talking Book interview guide 35

LSTA evaluation survey instrument..... 36

Appendix E: Additional output of statistical findings49

Appendix F: Summaries of qualitative analyses.....60

Focus groups 60

 LSTA goals 60

 World’s Best Workforce 61

 Responding to community needs..... 62

 LSTA Grant Making 64

 Promoting barrier-free access 64

 Future LSTA funding 65

Interviews 66

 Barriers to access..... 66

 Increasing awareness 67

 Communication and marketing..... 67

 Activities 67

 Support from SLS 68

 Future LSTA funding 69

Survey questions..... 69

 Why do these needs stand out?..... 69

 What other support would you like to see from SLS in the future? 71

March 29, 2022

Is there anything else you would like to share with SLS about LSTA-funded activities you have experienced within the evaluation period? 72

Executive Summary

Introduction and purpose of evaluation

Minnesota receives federal funds for libraries from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Funds are appropriated through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and allocated to State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs). State Library Services (SLS), a division of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), operates as a SLAA. Every five years, states or SLAAs outline how funds will be spent with an IMLS-approved LSTA Five-Year Plan.

Entities receiving funding are directed by IMLS's authorizing legislation to perform an independent evaluation prior to the end of the Five-Year Plan. This evaluation was led by Management Analysis and Development (MAD), a third-party evaluator. MAD is a division of Minnesota Management and Budget, within the State of Minnesota.

Minnesota's LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018–2022 has five main goals. The evaluation focused on the extent to which the Five-Year Plan activities made progress toward each goal. Evaluators looked at major activities under each of the five goals.

Major activities to support Goal A: Library services and policies promote barrier-free access

- Resource sharing
- Reducing barriers to access grant making
- Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL)

Major activities to support Goal B: Libraries contribute to the World's Best Workforce

- Youth programs and services—birth to age 18
- Libraries and the World's Best Workforce

Major activities to support Goal C: Libraries respond to diverse community needs

- Connecting communities
- Integrating equity
- Promoting equity through grant making

Major activities to support Goal D: Library value is measured and demonstrated

- Performance measures and outcomes
- Marketing

Major activities to support Goal E: Libraries facilitate digital equity and literacy

- Improving services
- Advancing digital literacy through grant making

Background and methods

There are three sets of questions in IMLS's evaluation guidelines: three retrospective questions, three process questions, and four methodology questions.

MAD conducted this evaluation from September 2021 to March 2022 by gathering and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data from survey results, focus groups, meetings with project staff, reports, and other

documentation. Evaluators conducted three focus groups with stakeholders and an online survey. Survey and focus group discussion questions asked about value, impact, and access to the main activities LSTA funded in Minnesota. Evaluators also reviewed more than 100 documents with a focus on outputs and outcomes in 41 reports submitted as part of MDE's State Program Report (SPR) to IMLS. MAD reviewed expenditures, spreadsheets, and surveys of participants in SLS staff-led trainings and events. MAD also reviewed information about competitive grants, including applications, reviewer forms, and training presentations.

Findings and recommendations

A-1: Progress on goals

Evaluation question: To what extent did your Five-Year Plan activities make progress toward each goal?

Progress on goals

Evaluators consider Goals A, B, C, D, and E achieved. Rationale and supporting evidence includes:

- Goals A (\$4,992,952), B (\$354,683), C (\$592,635), and E (\$489,678) are well-funded.
- Project narrative outcomes from the 41 projects in the SPR report indicated projects were beneficial and provided innovative ideas and improvements to Minnesota libraries.
- Project outputs were strong and provided value to patrons and library organizations in Minnesota. LSTA-funded projects circulated 1.4 million items, acquired more than 5,000 print and electronic materials, and created more than 500 learning resources.
- The majority of supporting details for the achievement of goals are based on feedback from survey and focus group participants on activities, which are listed below and are organized by goals.

Major activities to support Goal A: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Resource sharing

Summary: Survey respondents and focus group participants said Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and eLibrary Minnesota (ELM) provide significant value to their patrons, organizations, and staff. In particular, focus group participants from smaller or rural libraries said ILL is critical to their communities. Focus group participants also noted that ELM is especially important to schools where school librarian positions are being eliminated, though people have less familiarity with ELM.

Recommendations: Minitex can provide more information to current and potential users on how to use ILL and ELM. Marketing materials should clearly explain the services and how to use them. Consider additional training or resources for the school portal to increase familiarity and use at schools.

2. Reducing barriers to access grant making

Summary: SLS provided several grants to local communities to help them identify barriers to access and develop innovative responses to improve access to library services, programs, and materials. LSTA funds were used to conduct workshops, host webinars, and increase partnerships and connections among libraries and other organizations. Evaluations indicated participants learned more about the subjects discussed and intended to use that information in their work. A few focus group participants from smaller libraries talked about not having the time or resources to apply for grants, particularly when they perceive they will be competing with larger entities with more staff.

Recommendation: Consider streamlining or simplifying the grant application process. Share success stories from successful grantees with other libraries and communities around Minnesota so others can learn about what

works and develop ideas on how to implement similar programs in their area. Make sure to consider the school-based audience with grant making. Ensure grant timelines and support for grant making (such as trainings) are compatible with school-based staff availability. Consider some grant making efforts that focus on schools.

3. Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library

Summary: While survey respondents and focus group participants generally had a positive view of MBTBL, many indicated a lack of familiarity with the resource because their patrons have not indicated a need for it, or are unaware of it themselves. Group interview participants from MBTBL said the sign-up process can be onerous and they would like to see more materials available to patrons from MBTBL.

Recommendations: MBTBL can increase awareness of the services it provides by targeting marketing efforts to users with nonphysical disabilities who can use the services and to places seniors gather. More general marketing efforts could reach institutions and organizations that serve those who may benefit from using MBTBL.

Major activities to support Goal B: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Youth programs and services—birth to age 18

Summary: Focus group participants and survey respondents generally agreed activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families and caregivers strengthen Minnesota libraries and provide value to their organizations, staff, and patrons. Focus group participants said they learned valuable information and intended to implement that learning in their work. Survey responses indicated some neutrality and lack of awareness about barriers to accessing these programs.

Recommendations: Conduct additional conversations with stakeholders to learn more about specific barriers they face in accessing resources for children and families. Use that information to increase or target promotion of activities geared toward children and families to broaden familiarity with these offerings.

2. Libraries and the World's Best Workforce

Summary: Survey participants agreed that these activities provided value to their patrons, organizations, and staff. Focus group participants noted there is a sufficient number of high-quality professional development opportunities for library workers in Minnesota. This is particularly important because libraries have limited capacity to provide these opportunities directly to their workers. Participants appreciated opportunities to connect with their peers around the state to share experiences and practices. The increase in asynchronous and virtual options due to the COVID-19 pandemic has given some staff opportunities to participate that they might not have otherwise had, due to travel, time, or cost constraints.

Recommendations: Continue to provide professional development opportunities for library workers and include asynchronous and virtual opportunities to allow more individuals to participate. Work to ensure that trainings are offered in a manner that allow school librarians to attend. Often school librarians and media specialists are most available before and after school or would like content delivered flexibly so that they can access the content, such as webinars, when they are available or on school breaks. Consider having a dedicated point of contact for school-based staff in SLS so they know who to contact and feel supported. Ensure the perspective of school libraries is considered with SLS planning and programs. Expand opportunities for library workers to gather to discuss their experiences and successes and increase awareness of these opportunities through use of promotional methods.

Major activities to support Goal C: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Connecting communities

Summary: Projects enabled library staff to increase connections with other community organizations and patrons to improve services to library users and increase engagement among current and potential users. Survey respondents generally agreed activities that connect public libraries and schools provide value to their organizations, staff, and patrons, and strengthen Minnesota’s libraries.

Recommendations: Examine outcomes of successful “connecting communities” programs in order to share what worked and what did not work with other libraries that might be interested in undertaking similar efforts in their communities. Consider promoting and supporting strategies around libraries contributing to lifelong learning.

2. Integrate equity

Summary: According to survey respondents, activities that integrate equity provide value to library organizations, staff, and patrons and strengthen Minnesota libraries. Focus group participants discussed the value of workshops and collections, supporting immigrant, rural, and second-language communities, and accessibility. Some participants discussed communication and staffing barriers.

Recommendations: Continue and expand on successful programs like the Indigenous Representation workshops and collections. Provide additional training and resources for library staff to better equip them to carry out equity work.

3. Promoting equity through grant making

Summary: Survey respondents were neutral or lacked awareness about barriers to accessing activities that integrate equity. Focus group participants described positive experiences with SLS staff when they had questions or needed additional support in the grant application process. Grants offered organizations flexibility in trying new ideas. The grant application process can be onerous to those applying, and smaller libraries often feel they are at a disadvantage when applying for grants.

Recommendations: Consider streamlining or simplifying the grant application and reporting process, where possible. Provide additional training, resources, and support to smaller libraries interested in applying for grants. Continue to use the SLS newsletter to communicate about grant opportunities.

Major activities to support Goal D: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Performance measures and outcomes

Summary: SLS has provided resources and support to Minnesota libraries to help them demonstrate their value to their patrons and communities, such as developing useful data elements in the Minnesota Public Library Report, and their own evaluations of services and programs.

Recommendations: Increase collection of evaluation data from trainings, workshops, and other programs at SLS and encourage Minnesota libraries to do the same. Continue to provide support to libraries to enable them to better demonstrate their value.

2. Marketing

Summary: SLS conducted a communications audit and created a communications plan early in the evaluation period. SLS also sends a newsletter to stakeholders approximately twice per month. Focus group participants appreciated the SLS newsletter and the information provided but noted that there is often too much information to sift through.

Recommendations: Expand beyond the newsletter to other communication methods to share information with SLS stakeholders. Consider streamlining newsletter contents, or better highlight important or time-sensitive information (such as grant application deadlines).

Major activities to support Goal E: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Improving services

Summary: Most survey respondents agreed about the importance of digital equity activities to their organizations, staff, and patrons. Focus group participants also noted the importance of digital equity activities but noted barriers such as difficulties accessing ELM.

Recommendations: Look for ways to increase digital access to libraries and library materials. Provide additional resources and training to libraries so they can help their patrons access digital materials.

2. Advancing digital literacy through grant making

Summary: Grants provided digitization equipment, hot spots, coding training, maker spaces, and other opportunities. Some of these programs proved to be more popular than anticipated, while others became more significant due to the increase in remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations: Consider reducing process-related barriers to grant applications to quickly address digital literacy needs of the community. Encourage sharing information about successful programs. Continue to offer virtual and asynchronous options to expand opportunities for participation.

A-2: Measures of Success—Focal Areas and Intent

Evaluation question: To what extent did your Five-Year Plan activities achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?

Evaluators examined the number and dollar amount of the 41 projects and activities attributed to the Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intent. Projects tend to be complex and encompass several different goals and outcomes. Table 3 on page 20 contains information on total dollar amounts that fall under focal areas and intents. The focal area and intent with the largest dollar amount allocated to it is Information Access, with \$3,237,373, followed by Lifelong Learning at \$1,545,00, and Institutional Capacity at \$441,811. All focal areas have at least one project classified under the focal area category, except Economic and Employment Development. The focal area with the most projects is Lifelong Learning (20), followed by Information Access (10), and Institutional Capacity (7). The highest project count by intent is for Improving General Knowledge and Skills with 16 projects, under Lifelong Learning. The second highest count is Ability to Apply Information that Furthers Their Parenting and Family Skills under Lifelong Learning with a count of 10 projects.

A-3: Substantial groups

Evaluation question: Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for your Five-Year Plan activities? For the purposes of this question, a substantial focus would represent at least 10 percent of the total amount of resources committed by the overall plan across multiple years.

To determine which groups represented a substantial focus of Five-Year Plan activities, evaluators assigned each of the 41 projects to beneficiary groups, and often to more than one group per project or activity. The total budget for each project or activity was divided by the total amount of LSTA funds spent over the two available LSTA funding years (\$5,410,689). Eight groups were a substantial focus of LSTA activities in the evaluation period, based on meeting the threshold of at least 10 percent of the total of LSTA funding. The highest was *library workforce* (current and future), with 14 projects representing 27 percent of the funding pool. Other

groups in the top five were *families* with 14 projects and 20 percent of the funding pool, *school-aged youth (aged 6–17)* with 16 projects and 18 percent of the funding pool, and *ethnic or minority populations* with 13 projects and 17 percent of the funding pool. *Individuals with disabilities* (four projects and 14 percent of the funding pool) and *children aged 0–5* (12 projects and 14 percent of the funding pool) both ranked fifth.

B: Process questions and C: Methodology questions

Details on responses to process questions are on page 23; details on responses to methodology questions begin on page 24. The process questions section includes information on use of SPR data, changes made to the Five-Year Plan, and sharing SPR data and evaluation resources. The methodology section includes information on implementation of an independent evaluation, type of statistical and qualitative methods used, stakeholder engagement, and sharing of key findings and recommendations.

Introduction

Background

Minnesota receives federal funds for libraries from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Funds are appropriated through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) and allocated to State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs). State Library Services (SLS), a division of the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), operates as a SLAA and receives approximately \$2.8 million annually. Every five years, states or SLAAs determine how funds will be spent with an LSTA Five-Year plan. The current plan being evaluated is the Minnesota LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018–2022 (hereafter referred to as Minnesota LSTA Plan). The Minnesota LSTA Plan identifies the state’s current library needs and goals to guide spending based on stakeholder feedback gathered in 2016–2017. The goals also address eight federal LSTA priorities for funding. The Minnesota LSTA Plan contains five goals and seven corresponding subgoals that guide how the funds will be spent:

Goal A: Library services and policies promote barrier-free access. Libraries will be places that people of all backgrounds find welcoming and accessible. As libraries recast their role in communities, they will ensure that services and policies promote barrier-free access to materials, services, and spaces, and focus on both individual and community needs. (LSTA priorities 2, 6, 7)

Goal A subgoals:

- A1. Resource sharing
- A2. Reduce barriers to access grant making
- A3. Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL)

Goal B: Libraries contribute to the World’s Best Workforce. Strong school libraries will develop collections that reflect student recreational and curricular needs, provide seamless access to state-supported online resources, and work collaboratively with internal and external partners, including public libraries. They will integrate technology fully into student learning and problem solving, and employ engaged and qualified staff who participate in ongoing professional development. Public libraries are key partners that offer informal learning for all ages and family-focused programs that address early literacy needs. (LSTA priorities 1, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Goal B subgoals:

- B1. Youth programs and services—birth to age 18
- B2. Libraries and the World’s Best Workforce

Goal C: Libraries respond to diverse community needs. Libraries will expand efforts to extend free access beyond traditional library sites. Understanding that Minnesota’s cities and towns are rapidly diversifying, all library staff will benefit from training in racial equity, cultural humility, and radical hospitality. In assessing and adapting library services with an equity lens, libraries can provide responsive and high-quality services. (LSTA priorities 1, 3, 4, 5)

Goal C subgoals:

- C1. Connecting communities
- C2. Integrating equity
- C3. Promoting equity through grant making

Goal D: Library value is measured and demonstrated. SLS will increase libraries' capacity to measure and report statistical, financial, and outcome data that demonstrate the value of libraries. Minnesota libraries and policymakers will use data to plan and implement programs and services that positively impact their communities. SLS will raise public awareness of the value of libraries and library staff. SLS will explore new and creative ways to tell the stories of libraries across the state, to bring greater awareness to the key role libraries play in strengthening the lives of people and communities. (LSTA priorities: 2, 8)

Goal D subgoals:

D1: Performance measures and outcomes

D2: Marketing

Goal E: Libraries facilitate digital equity and literacy. SLS will support equitable access to broadband and efforts to promote its adoption and use, including digital and information literacy initiatives. SLS will encourage the innovative integration of technology into services for all people of Minnesota. (LSTA priorities: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6)

Goal E subgoals:

E1: Improving services

E2: Advancing digital literacy through grant making

Evaluation overview

Evaluation background

SLAAs are directed by IMLS's authorizing legislation to perform an independent evaluation prior to the end of the Five-Year plan. This evaluation was led by Management Analysis and Development (MAD), a third-party evaluator. MAD is a division of Minnesota Management and Budget, within the State of Minnesota.

More information and background on MAD related to the evaluation can be found in C-1: Implementation of an Independent Five-Year Evaluation on page 24.

Evaluation plan

There are three sets of questions in the evaluation guidelines, three retrospective questions, three process questions, and four methodology questions. The findings in this evaluation report are organized, numbered, and titled according to the ten required evaluation questions.

MAD consultants gathered information to supplement administrative data on program performance. In November and December 2021, MAD conducted three focus groups with 12 library stakeholders from around the state, in an effort to learn about what program participants perceived to be the impacts of LSTA-funded activities. During this time, MAD also conducted an online survey sent to a broad group of more than 2,000 stakeholders in the library community, and received 195 responses (a response rate of 6.5 percent). In January 2022, MAD conducted three group interviews with staff from SLS, Minitex, and representatives from MBTBL. MAD consultants reviewed related documents, reports submitted to IMLS for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 as part of the State Program Report (SPR), and a number of other documents, which are detailed in Appendix C: Documents reviewed and financial information.

Methods

A complete overview of the evaluation methods can be found in section C-2 on page 24, including the types of statistical and qualitative methods used in conducting the evaluation.

Evaluation report

A. Retrospective questions

A-1. Progress on goals

Evaluation question: To what extent did your Five-Year Plan activities make progress toward each goal? Where progress was not achieved as anticipated, discuss what factors (e.g., staffing, budget, over-ambitious goals, partners) contributed?

- Organize findings around each goal of the state’s 2018–2022 Five-Year Plan
- Categorize each goal as either (1) achieved, (2) partly achieved, or (3) not achieved

Overview of Five-Year Plan goals

Minnesota’s LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018–2022 had five main goals and seven subgoals. Table 1 below shows LSTA spending and project count by goal and subgoal.

Table 1. LSTA spending and project count by goal and subgoal

Goal/subgoal	Project count	LSTA budget
Goal A: Library services and policies promote barrier-free access	16	\$4,992,951.96
A1: Resource sharing	3	\$2,370,902.59
A2: Reduce barriers to access grant making	11	\$1,484,503.18
A3: Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL)	2	\$1,137,546.19
Goal B: Libraries contribute to the World’s Best Workforce	5	\$354,683.13
B1: Youth programs and services—birth to age 18	3	\$215,234.23
B2: Libraries and the World’s Best Workforce Grant Making	2	\$139,448.89
Goal C: Libraries respond to diverse community needs	11	\$592,634.68
C1: Connecting communities	6	\$425,234.23
C2: Integrating equity	3	\$62,400.45
C3: Promoting equity through grant making	2	\$105,000.00
Goal D: Library value is measured and demonstrated	1	\$42,480.00
D1: Performance measures and outcomes	1	\$42,480.00
D2: Marketing*	N/A	N/A
Goal E: Libraries facilitate digital equity and literacy	9	\$489,677.95
E1: Improving services	4	\$80,000.00
E2: Advancing digital literacy through grant making	5	\$201,455.40

*Note: The State of Minnesota’s payroll program is unable to parse staff time spent by activity. The portion of staff salaries spent on marketing activities is not available.

Overview of major activities

SLS had SPR data on 41 projects completed in the time period covered by this evaluation; 17 of those projects were in the 2018 fiscal year and 24 were in the 2019 fiscal year. MAD evaluators analyzed data (i.e., outputs and narrative outcomes) from these 41 project reports in the SPR. Reporting only provided narrative information on outcomes, which was difficult to aggregate, and provided limited information on outputs on disparate topics. As a result, the data alone were not sufficient to determine the extent to which SLS’s activities made progress

toward each subgoal. Evaluators conducted a survey and focus groups to collect more in-depth feedback on the impact of activities.

Explanation of major activities

1. **Promoting barrier-free access.** The largest portion of LSTA funds is allocated to this activity through Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL).
 - **ILL.** LSTA funds support a portion of ILL services delivered through Minitex. ILL allows patrons of participating Minnesota libraries to access a wide array of information resources in a range of formats whenever and wherever the information is needed.
 - **MBTBL.** A program of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, MBTBL provides direct library service to patrons of all ages with visual, physical, or reading disabilities for whom conventional print is a barrier to reading.
 - **Reducing barriers to access grant making.** Funds provide opportunities for local communities to identify barriers to access and develop innovative responses that improve access to library services, programs, and materials.
2. **Libraries contribute to the World's Best Workforce.** LSTA funding supports school libraries in developing collections that reflect student recreational and curricular needs, provide seamless access to state-supported online resources, and work collaboratively with internal and external partners, including public libraries.
 - **Programs serving youth birth to age 18 and their caregivers/families.** SLS works to build and nurture partnerships with libraries in their local communities. LSTA funds support creating connections with allied agencies and organizations aligned with the SLS mission, and to expand the work traditionally done by libraries.
 - **Libraries and the World's Best Workforce Grant Making.** LSTA funds support creative projects and innovative services through competitive, sole source, and targeted grants. Addressing the needs of libraries of all sizes, mini-grant opportunities encourage smaller libraries to develop modest programs that address local needs and capacity for grant management.
3. **Libraries respond to diverse community needs.** This activity expands efforts to extend free access beyond traditional library sites. Library staff will benefit from training in racial equity, cultural humility, and radical hospitality.
 - **Connecting communities.** SLS initiatives focus on building partnerships that connect libraries to one another and to community and statewide entities to improve services to local residents. Webinars, conference presentations, and targeted communications connect library staff with key information on timely topics. Data collection efforts demonstrate the central role of public libraries in creating an informed and engaged citizenry.
 - **Integrating equity.** SLS uses LSTA funds to provide a mechanism for increasing the understanding and adoption of equity as a core facet of library services.
 - **Promoting equity through grant making.** SLS provides resources for local, regional, or statewide projects that address concerns about equity in library services, programs, staffing, and operations with LSTA funds to increase equity and inclusion in libraries and to contribute to the diversification of library staff.
4. **Library value is measured and demonstrated.** SLS works with libraries to increase capacity to measure and report statistical, financial, and outcome data that demonstrates the value of libraries. SLS will also

raise public awareness of the value of libraries and library staff and explore new and creative ways to tell the stories of libraries across the state.

- **Performance Measures and Outcomes.** SLS helps libraries communicate value in more consistent, interesting, and engaging ways, using LSTA funding. The strategies and procedures to carry out the project include collaboration, training, and technical assistance.
 - **Marketing.** LSTA funding contributes to SLS's work to increase their capacity to promote its LSTA programs to the state's library community. SLS also promotes marketing techniques for libraries to more effectively communicate the impact of LSTA resources in the community.
5. **Libraries facilitate digital equity and literacy.** SLS supports equitable access to broadband and efforts to promote its adoption and use, including digital and information literacy initiatives. SLS encourages the innovative integration of technology into services for all people of Minnesota.
- **Improving services.** SLS uses LSTA funding to help libraries plan, develop, and implement innovative library services and technologies that serve all Minnesotans, as well as to partner with agencies and organizations working to provide equitable access to broadband.
 - **Advancing digital literacy through grant making.** Designed to provide local libraries with the opportunity to identify and address the need for digital literacy in the community. Grant opportunities support innovative approaches to digital inclusion, particularly those targeting tribal, rural, and other underserved communities.

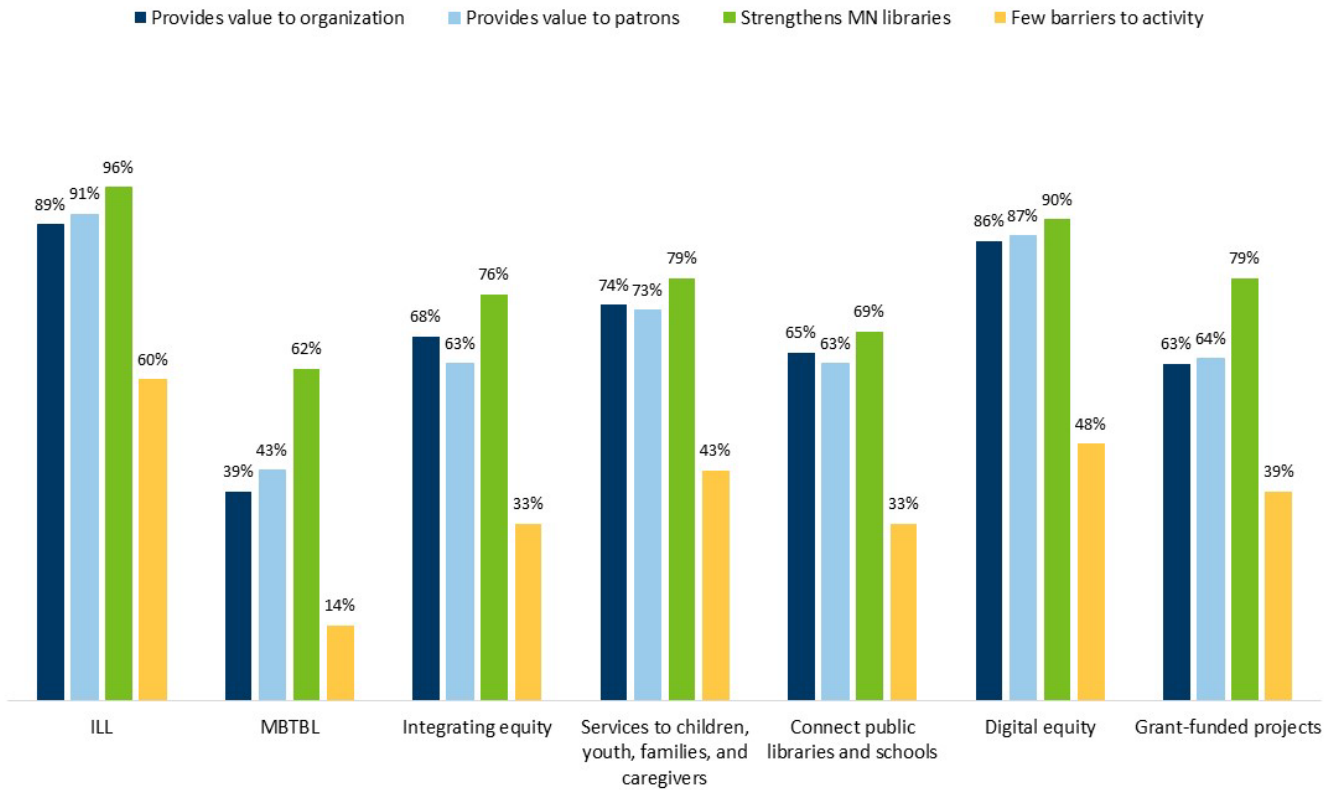
Discussion of major activities and findings

This section provides highlights from survey and focus groups results, combined with information from reports to evaluate SLS's five major activities and their corresponding goals. Through focus groups and surveys, stakeholders provided information on the activities' value to patrons, organizations, and Minnesota libraries overall, as well as perspective on barriers.

Overview of survey results

Figure 1 below shows survey respondents rated six of the seven activities positively (more than 60 percent strongly agreed or agreed) in terms of providing value to their organization and their patrons. MBTBL was the only activity rated lower (39 percent strongly agreed or agreed on value for their organization and 43 percent on value to their patrons). That rating can be attributed at least in part to the nearly 40 percent of survey respondents who responded "do not know" or "not applicable" about MBTBL. Figure 1 also shows survey respondents rated all seven activities positively (more than 60 percent strongly agreed or agreed) in terms of strengthening Minnesota libraries, and shows survey respondents see barriers to accessing all activities except ILL.

Figure 1. Percent of respondents who agree that the activity provides value to the organization and patrons, strengthens Minnesota libraries, and involves few barriers

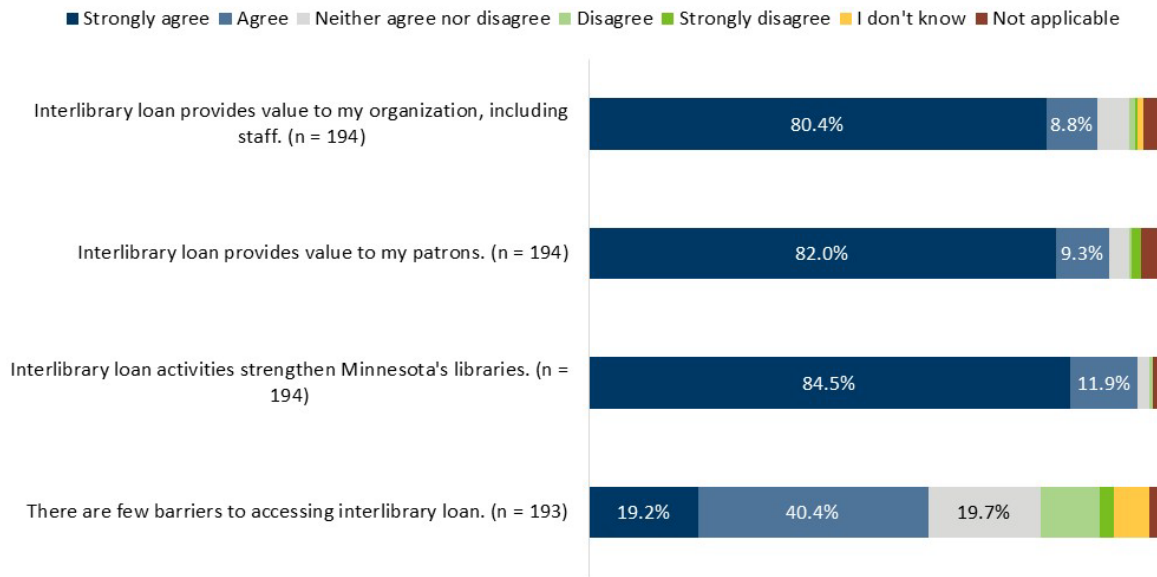


Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

Minitex staff, who coordinate ILL, received an average of 412,962 requests for materials (including those that were not filled) during FY18–20. Staff were able to fill an average of 283,188 requests per year during FY18–22. Items were not filled for reasons including materials already being in use or not available in the Minitex region. The average fill rate for public libraries was 55 percent. More than 98 percent of the requests came from public libraries rather than school libraries. However, many public libraries, especially outside the Twin Cities metro area, provide some level of ILL service to schools in their area. Therefore, some public library requests may have been for school recipients.

MAD asked survey respondents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement with statements about whether ILL provides value to their organizations and patrons and strengthens Minnesota libraries. More than 80 percent of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed with those statements, making ILL by far the most positively perceived of the seven activities. Nearly 60 percent of respondents said there were few barriers to accessing ILL.

Figure 2. Value of Interlibrary Loan



Survey respondents were asked to rate their top three positive impacts (among 11 options) of ILL on their organizations, staff, and patrons. Respondents said ILL helps them:

- Discover information resources or obtain materials (physical or digital) for them (83 percent).
- Participate in lifelong learning (73 percent).
- Overcome barriers to academic achievement (46 percent).

Focus group participants described eBooks Minnesota as integral and invaluable, particularly during the pandemic when some participants saw significant usage. Library staff discussed promoting it to schools and schools noted the positive impact the collection has had on resources available to schools. One participant suggested expanding the collection and another participant appreciated Minitex pushing publishers to include diverse books and books with text-to-speech available.

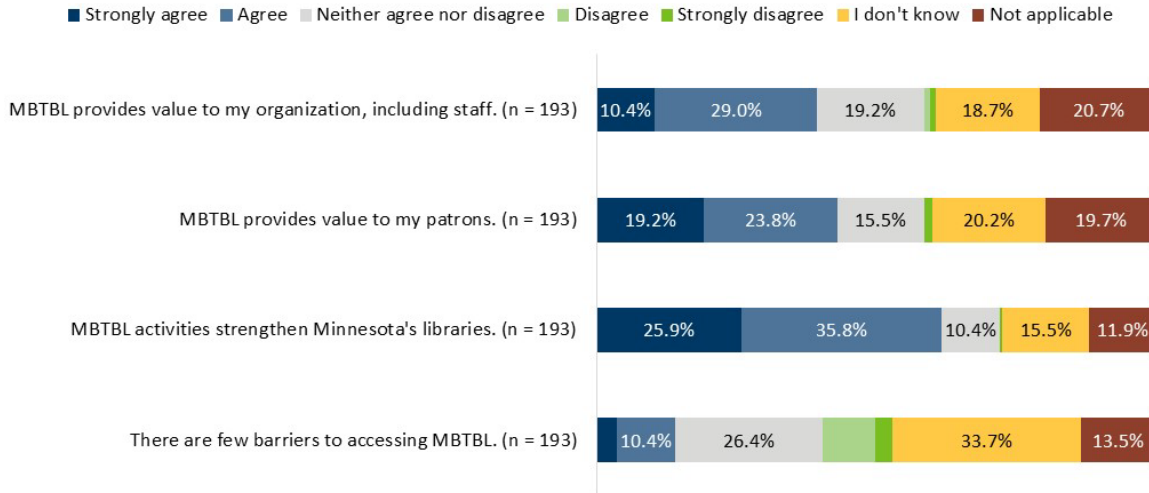
Focus group participants also noted the importance and value of the ELM database. One participant said ELM is particularly important for school partners, as school librarian positions are being eliminated, to ensure that schools continue to have access to resources that support students. This participant also noted that not everyone is familiar with ELM, so it would benefit from additional promotion. Another participant said they are unable to view data on ELM usage, so while patrons appreciate it, it is challenging to know how much it is used. Participants also discussed ILL as an important resource that provides significant value to their patrons and partners (e.g., public schools, colleges). One participant observed a lot of ILL usage in the data they have access to and said that ILL was one of the first activities they got running during the pandemic. Most participants that discussed ILL said that it is critical to their size library and/or location. They noted that ILL fills gaps for their patrons, that ILL services are fast, and that it was a highly requested service during closure.

Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library

During the evaluation period for which SPR data were available, MBTBL served nearly 1,380 institutions and around 10,000 individual patrons. The average number of items circulated was 255,791 (mainly digital books). While MBTBL served people of all ages, most patrons were age 65 or older and 92 percent were legally blind or visually impaired. Patrons downloaded an average of 81,150 items over the evaluation period. As a regional

library of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), MBTBL offered access to digital audio, braille and large print books, and other reading materials. Services were provided over the phone, by mail, email, and through digital downloads.

Figure 3. Value of MBTBL



When asked about the value MBTBL brings to their organization, staff, and patrons, 40 percent of respondents said they did not know or it was not applicable. However, 62 percent strongly agreed or agreed MBTBL’s activities strengthen Minnesota libraries. When it comes to barriers to access, most respondents did not know (34 percent) or were neutral (26 percent).

Survey respondents ranked their top three positive impacts on patrons, staff, and their organizations as:

- Helping them participate in lifelong learning (54 percent).
- Helping them discover information resources or obtaining materials (physical or digital) for them (47 percent).

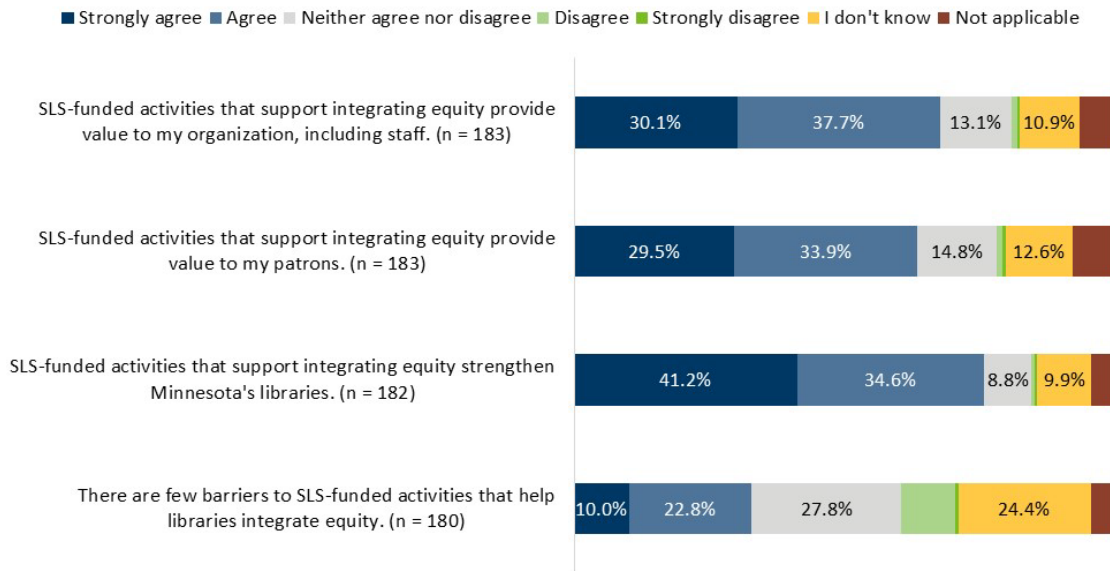
Notably, 31 percent of respondents selected “none of the above” when asked about positive impacts. (31 percent).

Focus group participants who discussed MBTBL said that it is a service they forget about, often due to low usage, though they recognized the importance and value of the service for those who need it. A few also noted it is challenging to make sure all staff are knowledgeable about library services, including MBTBL, particularly when staff work part-time and there is staff turnover.

Integrating equity

SLS supports libraries in their efforts to recruit and maintain diverse staff that reflect communities served. SLS strives to identify and reduce or eliminate any ways in which its operations reflect institutional or structural racism. SLS also strives to contribute to more equitable library services across the state.

Figure 4. Value of integrating equity



Nearly 70 percent of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed activities that support integrating equity provide value to their organizations and staff. Nearly 65 percent said activities that support integrating equity provides value patrons. Three-quarters of respondents said integrating equity strengthens Minnesota libraries. When asked if they agreed or disagreed that there are few barriers to accessing activities that integrate equity, about one-third of respondents strongly agreed or agreed. However, more than half responded neutrally. Respondents ranked the top three positive impacts integrating equity in libraries has on their patrons, organizations, and staff as:

- Helping them participate in lifelong learning (39 percent).
- Helping them overcome barriers to academic achievement (37 percent).
- Providing them with the opportunity to engage with their community (34 percent).

The 2019 Indigenous Representation workshop evaluation found the majority of participants strongly agreed or agreed they learned something in the workshop, they felt more confident about the information shared in the workshop, and that they intended to apply what they learned. The Indigenous Representations workshops are designed for educators and provide training on how to select, critically analyze, and incorporate Indigenous youth literature. Virtually all respondents strongly agreed or agreed that applying what they learned would improve services to library users. Participants were asked what one thing they would definitely do after attending the workshop. Some responses included:

- “I will educate others about the importance of evaluating the representations of Indigenous characters in children’s literature in our collections and of selecting high quality, positive resources.”
- “Weed through my collection with a more discerning eye on authenticity of depictions of American Indians, their history, and how they are portrayed today.”
- “Going into the conference I felt like I had a basic level of understanding of how to determine quality literature. I am more prepared and will talk with patrons and coworkers about Indigenous youth literature.”

Focus group participants discussed the value of the Indigenous Representation workshops. These workshops and collections were described by participants as amazing, formative, and wonderful. Participants discussed the benefits of promoting the collections through ILL and throughout their own organization's collection, and the opportunity to learn about different tribal nations. Participants appreciated that the materials were selected by American Indian communities and they said that this work fostered stronger, more trusting relationships for the future. One participant suggested replicating this work with other communities in Minnesota, such as Hmong and Somali.

More than half of participants in the 2019 All Are Welcome: Inclusive Outreach and Participatory Engagement for Advancing Racial Equity in Libraries workshops strongly agreed or agreed they had a better understanding of government and library roles in creating racial equity after attending the workshop. All Are Welcome workshops provided resources for library leaders and staff on understanding the role libraries have in advancing racial equity, and tools for inclusive outreach and community engagement. Most participants indicated they were more familiar with inclusive outreach and community outreach principles after attending the workshop. Additionally, most said they intended to or had begun to develop inclusive engagement strategies for their libraries.

All respondents to an evaluation of a segment of Project READY workshops, for those library leaders and staff interested in improving relationships with, and services to, BIPOC youth, said they felt they had made progress on their racial justice journey after completing the initial workshop. Most respondents said they were more familiar with colonialism, Reconstruction, Jim Crow, systemic racism, antiracism, cultural competency, implicit bias, microaggression, and white privilege after completing part one of the workshops series. Participants described the way Project READY has already affected their work with youth:

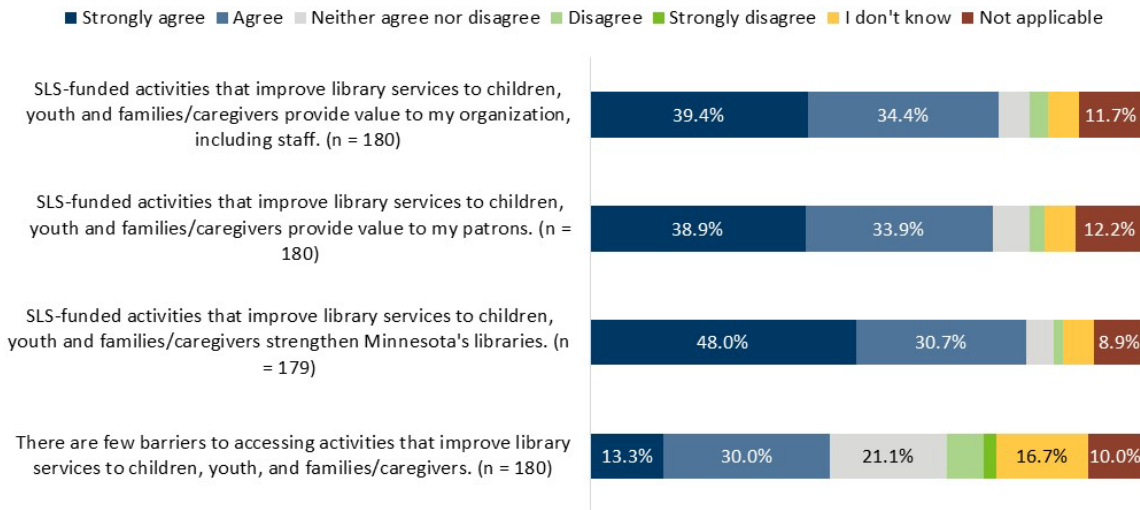
- "I have been actively purchasing more diverse titles than White-centered titles this year. I have also been engaging the staff in our school in uncomfortable conversations by leading a book group. I also have been creating book lists and conducting book talks on a diverse selection of books."
- "It has increased my awareness of the youth that come into my library and the way I interact with individuals differently. It's helping me examine whether my interacting differently with different kids is simply because their needs are different, or because there is some implicit bias or pre-conceived notion that I'm acting on without realizing it."

Focus group participants also discussed the value of supporting immigrant, rural, and second-language communities, as well as the value of Project READY and the All Are Welcome workshops. Participants commented on the necessary and timely nature of supporting immigrant, rural, and second-language communities, with one noting that, without receiving grant support, staff training in this area likely would not have happened. They also shared successes in this area, including translating catalogues into other languages, assisting individuals in studying for citizenship, bridging gaps between immigrant parents and first-generation children, hiring full-time liaisons from specific communities, and offering programming such as Native American book clubs, entrepreneurship for the Latinx community, and digital literacy in Spanish.

Improving services to children, youth, and families

SLS staff coordinate professional development, programs, and resources to improve library services to children, youth, and families or caregivers. Some of the programs in this category include workshops with the Children Museum of Minnesota (Power of Play and Playful Learning, which explore the benefits of play and how to support play in libraries), Supercharged Storytimes, and early literacy bookmarks and posters, both of which support early literacy.

Figure 5. Value of improving services to children, youth, and families



Nearly three-quarters of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families or caregivers provide value to their organizations, staff, and patrons. Slightly more than three-quarters indicated these activities strengthen Minnesota’s libraries. While 43 percent of respondents indicated they see few barriers to accessing activities that improve library services to children, youth, families, and caregivers or families, 21 percent responded neutrally, and 17 percent said they did not know.

Survey respondents were asked to choose their top 3 of 11 possible positive impacts of activities that improve services to children, youth, and families or caregivers; respondents said the services:

- Help them participate in lifelong learning (51 percent).
- Improve their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills (49 percent).
- Provide information that furthers their parenting and family skills (49 percent).

Virtually all participants in a Power of Play workshop said the session met at least most of their expectations, with 81 percent indicating they strongly agreed or agreed they had a better understanding of the role of play in learning after attending the workshop. All respondents said they intended to incorporate Power of Play strategies at their library, and to apply what they learned. Nearly all strongly agreed or agreed that applying what they learned would improve library services. Some examples of what participants said they would do after attending the workshop included:

- “I will make an effort to carve time in my day to further explore some of the research introduced yesterday. I’d love to strengthen my programs and services to families by learning more about what I can apply to my work.”
- “Be more mindful of how I talk to children about their play. For example, I will remove the term ‘good job’ from my conversation when talking to kids about their play/creation. I will also be better able to explain the importance of Play to the caregivers who come to early literacy events and do not always see the benefit of Free Play or play that has a pre-defined goal.”

SLS surveyed participants to learn about the impact of Supercharged Storytimes and found that 24 respondents presented 886 sessions since they first completed or accessed the program. Average attendance for children

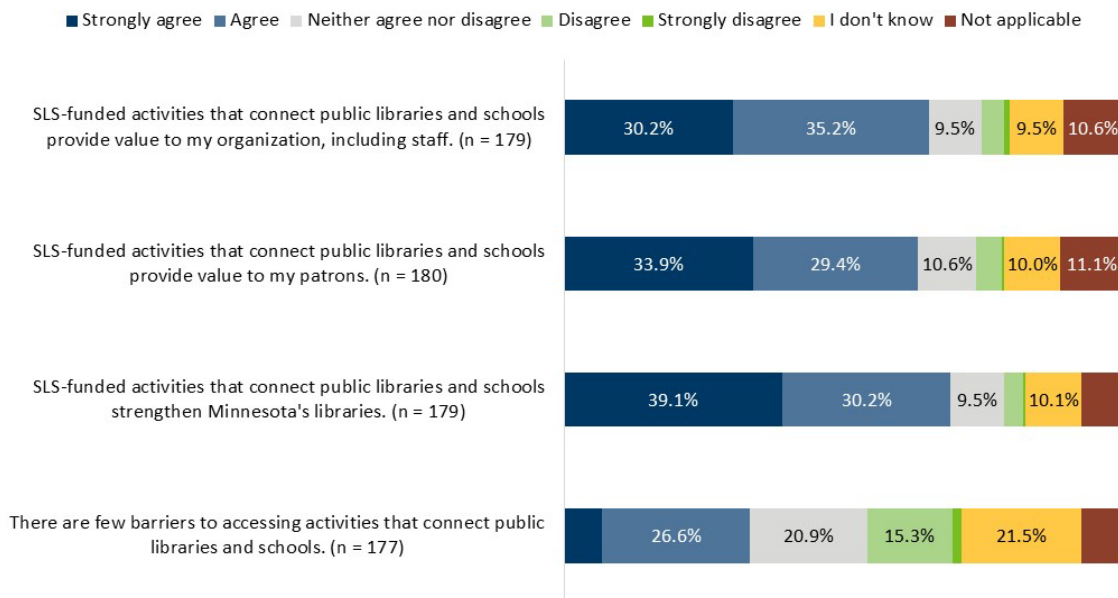
ranged from 5 to 60, and adult attendance averaged 2 to 40. When talking about the storytimes, 46 percent of survey respondents said they sometimes used knowledge or practices they learned from Supercharged Storytimes, while 21 percent said they often did and 33 percent said they rarely did.

Focus group participants said Every Child Ready to Read, where public librarians and library specialists support early literacy through teaching parents and caregivers how to support their children’s early literacy development, and Supercharged Storytimes were very valuable both for patrons and library staff.

Connecting public libraries and schools

SLS staff develop and coordinate programs and professional development opportunities designed to connect Minnesota’s public schools and libraries. Examples include the 90 Second Newbery Film Festival (an annual contest where young filmmakers create movies to tell the storis of Newbery winning books), summer meal program collaborations, and the Libraries Serving Youth Meetup, which connects school and public librarians who serve youth.

Figure 6. Value of connecting public libraries and schools



More than 60 percent of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that activities that connect public libraries and schools provide value to their organizations, staff, and patrons, and strengthen Minnesota’s libraries.

When asked to rank the top three positive impacts of activities that connect public libraries and schools, survey respondents chose the following:

- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement (45 percent).
- Helps them discover information resources or obtain materials (physical or digital) for them (40 percent).
- Helps them participate in lifelong learning (36 percent).

Evaluations for the 2020 Libraries Serving Youth Meetups were generally positive. All participants strongly agreed or agreed they learned something in the session. Most strongly agreed or agreed they felt more

confident about the information shared in the workshop, that they intended to apply what they had learned, and that doing so would improve library services.

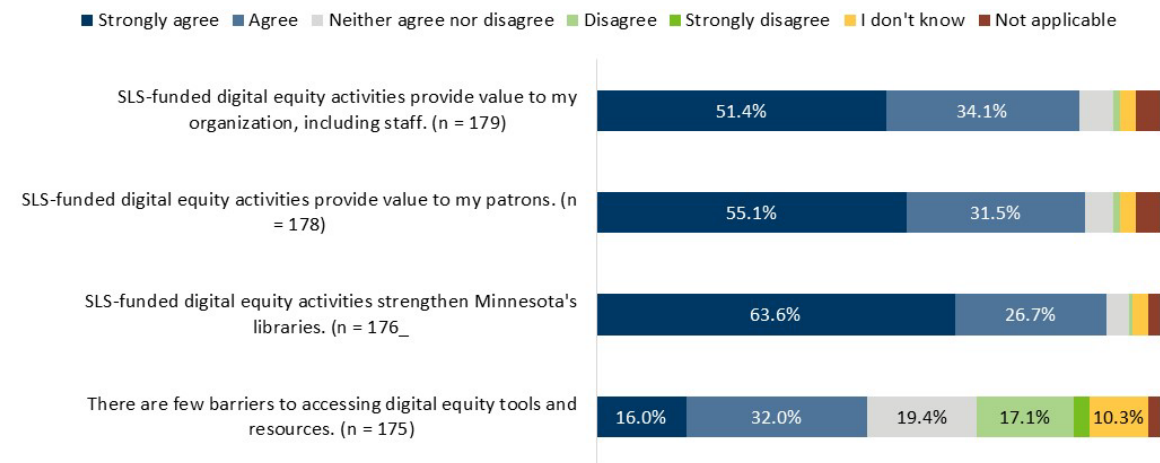
Focus groups also discussed Libraries Serving Youth Meetups. They said meetups have been helpful for connecting library professionals across the state to share experiences and practices and that the meetups have offered opportunities to learn across organizations, cultivating a rich learning environment. The meetups were noted as particularly helpful during the pandemic, as people have been more disconnected. One participant noted that they have felt more connected during the pandemic due to the success of meetups than they have in over a decade of library service.

Focus groups also mentioned that Summer Meal Program collaborations were very valuable to communities, particularly during the pandemic. One participant noted that they were able to continue this program during the pandemic because of the partnerships they had developed.

Digital Equity

SLS staff provide local libraries with an opportunity to identify and address the need for digital access, literacy, and inclusion in the community. Examples include the eBooks Minnesota Collection from Minitex, and hot spots and mobile devices for circulation.

Figure 7. Value of digital equity



More than 80 percent of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that digital equity activities provide value to their organizations, staff, and patrons, and strengthen Minnesota’s libraries. While 48 percent strongly agree or agree there are few barriers to accessing digital equity tools or resources, 17 percent disagreed with that statement, and 19 percent were neutral.

When asked to rank the top three positive impacts of digital equity activities on patrons, organizations, and staff, survey respondents chose the following:

- Expands their access to technology (64 percent).
- Helps them discover information, resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them (54 percent).
- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement (45 percent).

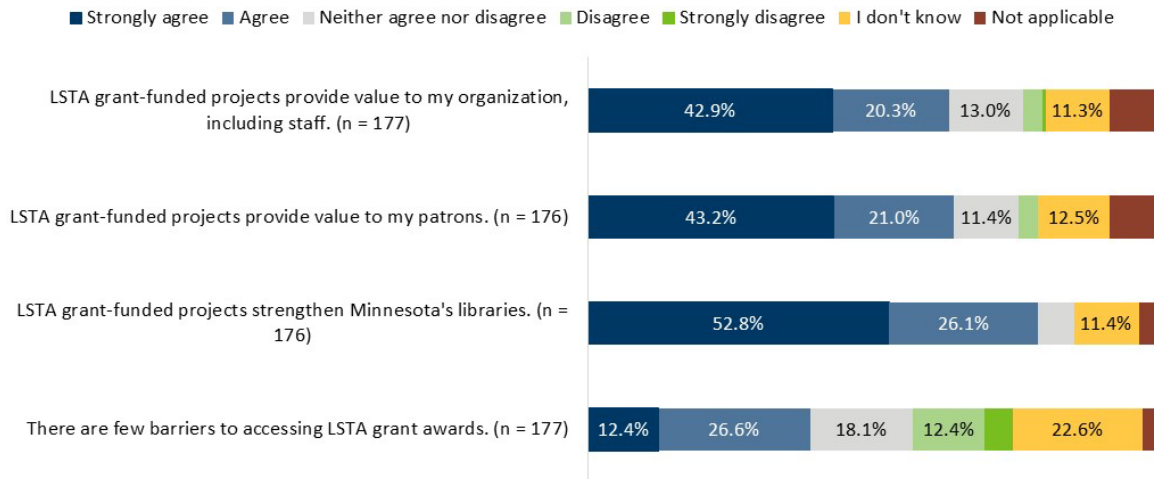
Focus groups participants described eBooks Minnesota as integral and invaluable, particularly during the pandemic when some participants saw significant usage. Library staff discussed promoting it to schools and

schools noted the positive impact the collective has had on resources available to schools. One participant suggested expanding the collective and another participant appreciated Minitex pushing publishers to include diverse books and books with text-to-speech available.

Grant-funded projects

Large or mini competitive grants and targeted grants help Minnesota libraries carry out projects that address community needs, strengthen local libraries, and address one or more LSTA subgoals.

Figure 8. Value of LSTA grant-funded projects



Survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that LSTA grant-funded projects provide value to their organization, including staff (63 percent), and patrons (64 percent). Seventy-nine percent said LSTA grant-funded projects strengthen Minnesota’s libraries. When asked about barriers to accessing LSTA grant awards, 39 percent of respondents agreed there were few barriers. Twenty-three percent said they did not know, and 18 percent responded they neither agreed nor disagreed.

When asked to rank the top three positive impacts of LSTA grant-funded projects on their organizations, staff, and patrons, survey respondents chose the following:

- Improves library operations (44 percent).
- Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community (38 percent).
- Helps them participate in lifelong learning (31 percent).

Focus group participants commonly discussed positive experiences with the grant-making process and the value of grant opportunities. Participants that discussed positive experience with the grant-making process often mentioned the helpfulness of SLS staff in answering questions, providing support, and communicating with applicants. Participants noted that grant opportunities allowed them the flexibility to try new ideas, particularly those that may not otherwise receive organizational or local support. Participants also noted that the hot spot grant was a particularly effective grant opportunity because it was targeted and focused, and it allowed flexibility in implementation to ensure hot spots were implemented where they were most needed.

When it comes to barriers, focus group participants said they do not have the capacity to apply for LSTA grants (given the amount of work involved in the application), that it can be challenging to identify an LSTA goal that aligns with goals of an organization or its patrons (particularly for schools), and that the budget requirements in LSTA grants do not always align with what organizations or schools actually need.

Progress on goals

The evaluators consider Goals A, B, C, D, and E achieved. The rationale and supporting evidence include: Goals A (\$4,992,952), B (\$354,683), C (\$592,635), and E (\$489,678) are well-funded.

Project narrative outcomes from the 41 projects in the SPR report indicated projects were beneficial and provided innovative ideas and improvements to Minnesota libraries. Outcomes for grantees varied considerably and were difficult to aggregate, as each project was unique. Some examples of outcomes for Goal A projects include:

- A Minitex-conducted survey found eBooks MN users expressed increased satisfaction and awareness. Respondents expressed their appreciation of the increased access to information the program provides.
- Library staff from several institutions attended an intensive three-day workshop in November 2019 to learn how and when to collaborate as a team, how to design transformative programs and services in response to community needs, and practice presentation skills.
- MBTBL produced more than 14,000 digital copies of books on demand for more than 2,000 patrons who do not have access to a computer to download books from Minnesota Braille and Audio Reading Download (MN BARD) or prefer to receive digital titles by mail.
- One library acquired digital materials to meet community needs while the library was closed to walk-in patrons due to a roof collapse.

Outcomes for Goal B projects include:

- Professional development opportunities and resources increased knowledge, skills, and resources related to early literacy for library staff, including family engagement and playful learning.
- Increased Library Go usage among elementary-aged students, added library books that reflect student recreational and curricular needs, and aligned library resources so students and families understood how to navigate and use available materials. Library Go automatically provides a library card to public school students, and to some charter and private school students, as well.
- Investment in activities intended to improve public and school library services for children and youth from birth through high school graduation enabled libraries to align their services and efforts to statewide priorities and identified needs, including reducing the achievement gap, supporting student literacy and school engagement, and preparing all youth for success in college and their careers.

Outcomes for Goal C projects include:

- Engaged elementary and middle school students in library-media activities that focused on the promotion of equity, using grant funds to promote student voices through storytelling projects and purchasing high-quality diverse books that reflect the student population.
- Workshop trainings for library staff providing storytimes on how to integrate developmentally appropriate topics of race into their programming. Participants gained skills with inclusive community engagement and strategies to incorporate racial equity in two specific types of programming, storytimes and book clubs.
- The Indigenous Representations workshop and presentations received a high level of interest; every presentation on this topic leads to requests for additional presentations.

Goal D projects include:

- SLS staff sent an average of two newsletters per month to a list of around 1,700 subscribers, with an open rate of 38 percent. Most subscribers were from public or school libraries.

Goal E projects include:

- Adult patrons were provided exposure to new and emerging technology, such as virtual reality (VR), filmmaking, and digital conversion to help them gain fluency in new areas of digital literacy.
- Minitex Outreach and Instruction librarians provided instructional sessions on ELM resources via 149 in-person workshops and 18 webinars for more than 3,000 attendees.
- One grantee developed innovative library maker classes and events, outreach services, and program promotion to improve digital inclusion. Several classes were created and implemented, reaching mostly children ages 12 and up and their families, with some classes geared specifically to adults, and a series of events for families who homeschool their children.

Project outputs as shown in Table 2 provided value in many ways to patrons and library organizations in Minnesota. Goals A and C in particular show significant outputs and contributions appropriate to the types of projects classified under each goal. Through LSTA projects, more than 1.4 million materials were circulated, nearly 4,000 print items were acquired, nearly 1,340 electronic materials were acquired, and more than 500 learning resources were created.

Table 2. Project outputs of 41 LSTA funded projects

Output	Outputs that support Goal A projects	Outputs that support Goal B projects	Outputs that support Goal C projects	Outputs that support Goal E projects	Total outputs
Number of hardware acquired	62	0	30	428	520
Number of software acquired	27	0	0	370	397
Number of licensed databases acquired	0	0	1	0	1
Number of print materials (books & government documents) acquired	1,875	0	2,095	0	3,970
Number of electronic materials acquired	1,281	0	58	0	1,339
Number of audio/visual units (audio discs, talking books, other recordings) acquired	0	0	75	0	75
Total number of items circulated (includes ebook checkouts)	1,462,496	0	0	10	1,462,506
Total number of ILL transactions	303,711	0	0	60	303,771
Number of learning resources created (online learning guides, toolkits)	392	14	100	1	507

Summary of findings from survey and focus groups and recommendations

The majority of supporting details for the achievement of Goals A, B, C, and E are based on the survey and focus groups’ feedback on activities. This can be found in the discussion of major activities and findings section starting on page 16. Summaries of the findings for the major activities and recommendations below are organized by goals.

Major activities to support Goal A: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Resource sharing

Summary: Survey respondents and focus group participants said ILL and ELM provide significant value to their patrons, organizations, and staff. In particular, focus group participants from smaller or rural libraries said ILL is

critical to their communities. Focus group participants also noted ELM is especially important to schools where school librarian positions are being eliminated, but people have less familiarity with ELM.

Recommendations: Minitex can provide more information on how to use ILL and ELM. Marketing materials should clearly explain the services and how to use them. Consider additional training or resources for the school portal to increase familiarity and use at schools.

2. Reducing barriers to access grant making

Summary: SLS provided several grants to local communities to help them identify barriers to access and develop innovative responses to improve access to library services, programs, and materials. LSTA funds were used to conduct workshops, host webinars, and increase partnerships and connections among libraries and other organizations. Evaluations indicated participants learned more about the subjects discussed and intended to use that information in their work. A few focus group participants from smaller libraries talked about not having the time or resources to apply for grants, particularly when they perceive they will be competing with larger entities with more staff.

Recommendations: Consider streamlining or simplifying the grant application process. Share success stories from successful grantees with other libraries and communities around Minnesota so others can learn about what works and develop ideas on how to implement similar programs in their area. Make sure to consider the school-based audience with grant making. Ensure grant timelines and support for grant making (such as trainings) are compatible with school-based staff availability. Consider some grant making efforts that focus on schools.

3. Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library

Summary: While survey respondents and focus group participants generally had a positive view of MBTBL, many indicated a lack of familiarity with the resource because their patrons have not indicated a need for it, or are unaware of it themselves. Group interview participants from MBTBL said the sign-up process can be onerous and they would like to see more materials available from MBTBL.

Recommendations: MBTBL can increase awareness of the services it provides by targeting marketing efforts to users with nonphysical disabilities who can use the services and to places seniors gather. More general marketing efforts could reach institutions and organizations that serve those who may benefit from using MBTBL.

Major activities to support Goal B: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Youth programs and services—birth to age 18

Summary: Focus group participants and survey respondents generally agreed activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families and caregivers strengthen Minnesota libraries and provide value to their organizations, staff, and patrons. Workshop participants said they learned valuable information and intended to implement that learning in their work. Survey responses indicated some neutrality and lack of awareness about barriers to accessing these programs.

Recommendations: Conduct additional conversations with stakeholders to learn more about specific barriers they face in accessing resources for children and families. Use that information to increase promotion of activities geared toward children and families to broaden familiarity with these offerings.

2. Libraries and the World's Best Workforce

Summary: Survey participants agreed that these activities provided value to their patrons, organizations, and staff. Focus group participants noted there is high quality and a good quantity of professional development

opportunities for library workers in Minnesota. This is particularly important because libraries have limited capacity to provide such opportunities for their workers. Participants appreciated opportunities to connect with their peers around the state to share experiences and practices. The increase in asynchronous or virtual options due to the COVID-19 pandemic has given some staff opportunities to participate they might not otherwise have had, due to travel, time, or cost constraints.

Recommendations: Continue to provide professional development opportunities for library workers and include asynchronous and virtual opportunities to allow more individuals to participate. Work to ensure that trainings are offered in a manner that allow school librarians to attend. Often school librarians and media specialists are most available before and after school or would like content delivered flexibly so that they can access the content, such as webinars, when they are available or on school breaks. Consider having a dedicated point of contact for school-based staff in SLS so they know who to contact and feel supported. Ensure the perspective of school libraries is considered with SLS planning and programs. Expand opportunities for library workers to gather to discuss their experiences and successes and increase awareness of these opportunities through use of promotional methods.

Major activities to support Goal C: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Connecting communities

Summary: Projects enabled library staff to increase connections with other community organizations and patrons to improve services to library users and increase engagement among current and potential users. Survey respondents generally agreed activities that connect public libraries and schools provide value to their organizations, staff, and patrons, and strengthen Minnesota's libraries.

Recommendations: Examine outcomes of successful "connecting communities" programs in order to share what worked and what did not work with other libraries that might be interested in undertaking similar efforts in their communities. Consider promoting and supporting strategies around libraries contributing to lifelong learning.

2. Integrate equity

Summary: According to survey respondents, activities that integrate equity provide value to library organizations, staff, and patrons, and strengthen Minnesota libraries. Focus group participants discussed the value of workshops and collections, supporting immigrant, rural, and second-language communities, and accessibility. Some participants discussed communication and staffing barriers.

Recommendations: Continue and expand on successful programs like the Indigenous Representation workshops and collections. Provide additional training and resources for library staff to better equip them to carry out this work.

3. Promoting equity through grant making

Summary: Survey respondents were neutral or lacked awareness about the barriers to accessing activities that integrate equity. Focus group participants described positive experiences with SLS staff when they had questions or needed additional support in the grant application process. Grants offered organizations flexibility in trying new ideas. The grant application process can be onerous to those applying, and smaller libraries often feel they are at a disadvantage when applying for grants.

Recommendations: Consider streamlining or simplifying the grant application and reporting process, where possible. Provide additional training, resources, and support to smaller libraries interested in applying for grants. Continue to use the SLS newsletter to communicate about grant opportunities.

Major activities to support Goal D: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Performance measures and outcomes

Summary: SLS has provided resources and support to Minnesota libraries to help them demonstrate their value to their patrons and communities, such as developing useful data elements in the Minnesota Public Library Report, and their own evaluations of services and programs.

Recommendations: Increase collection of evaluation data from trainings, workshops, and other programs at SLS and encourage Minnesota libraries to do the same. Continue to provide support to libraries to enable them to better demonstrate their value.

2. Marketing

Summary: SLS conducted a communications audit and created a communications plan early in the evaluation period. SLS also sends a newsletter to stakeholders approximately twice per month. Focus group participants appreciate the SLS newsletter and the information provided in it, but often there is too much information to sift through.

Recommendations: Expand beyond the newsletter to other communication methods to share information with SLS stakeholders. Consider streamlining newsletter contents, or better highlight important or time-sensitive information (such as grant application deadlines).

Major activities to support Goal E: Summary of findings and recommendations

1. Improving services

Summary: Most survey respondents agreed about the importance of digital equity activities to their organizations, staff, and patrons. Focus group participants also noted the importance of digital equity activities but noted barriers such as difficulties in accessing ELM.

Recommendations: Look for ways to increase digital access to libraries and library materials. Provide additional resources and training to libraries so they can help their patrons access digital materials.

2. Advancing digital literacy through grant making

Summary: Grants provided digitization equipment, hot spots, coding training, maker spaces, and other opportunities. Some of these programs proved to be much more popular than anticipated, while others became more significant due to the increase in remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Recommendations: Consider reducing process-related barriers to grant applications to quickly address digital literacy needs of the community. Encourage sharing information about successful programs. Continue to offer virtual and remote options to expand opportunities for participation.

A-2. Measures of Success: Focal Areas and Intents

Evaluation question: To what extent did your Five-Year Plan activities achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?

For Table 3, evaluators examined the number and dollar amount of the 41 projects or activities attributed to the Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents. Projects tend to be complex and encompass several different goals and outcomes. The table contains information on total dollar amounts that fall under focal areas and intents.

Table 3. Primary focal areas and intents for projects and activities

Focal area and intents	Projects	LSTA budget
Lifelong Learning	20	\$1,545,000
<i>Improve users' formal education</i>	4	\$209,640
<i>Improve users' general knowledge and skills</i>	16	\$1,335,361
Information Access	10	\$3,237,373
<i>Improve users' ability to discover information resources</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources</i>	10	\$3,237,373
Institutional Capacity	7	\$441,811
<i>Improve the library workforce</i>	7	\$441,811
<i>Improve library's physical and technology infrastructure</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Improve library operations</i>	N/A	N/A
Economic and Employment Development	N/A	N/A
<i>Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources</i>	N/A	N/A
Human Services	3	\$86,676
<i>Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family, or household finances</i>	N/A	N/A
<i>Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health and wellness</i>	3	\$86,676
<i>Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills</i>	N/A	N/A
Civic Engagement	1	\$99,829
<i>Improve users' ability to participate in their community</i>	1	\$99,829
<i>Improve users' ability to participate in community conversations around topics of concern</i>	N/A	N/A

Analysis of focal areas and intents

The focal area and intents with the largest dollar amount allocated to it is Information Access, with \$3,237,373, followed by Lifelong Learning at \$1,545,00 and Institutional Capacity at \$441,811. All focal areas have at least one project classified under the focal area category, except Economic and Employment Development. The focal area with the most projects is Lifelong Learning (20), followed by Information Access (10), and Institutional Capacity (7). The highest project count by intent is for improving General Knowledge and Skills (16), under Lifelong Learning. The second highest count is Ability to Apply Information that Furthers Their Parenting and Family Skills under Lifelong Learning (10).

Explanation of focal area and intents emphasis

Most projects or activities and funding supporting the goals in the Minnesota LSTA Plan relate to the focal areas and corresponding intents of Lifelong Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Capacity. The remaining focal areas do not relate as well to the goals in the Minnesota LSTA Plan. Therefore, fewer projects and less funding are classified under the focal areas and intents of Economic and Employment Development, Human Services, and Civic Engagement.

SLS also does not provide direct service to library patrons (MBTBL does directly serve patrons). It is an administrative agency, so it has less opportunity to affect patrons' lives directly.

Focal areas aligned with impact areas from survey

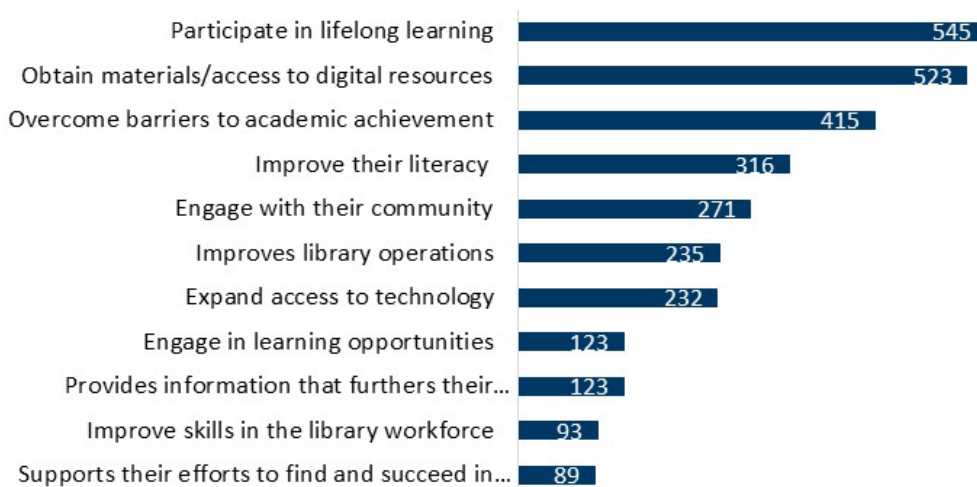
Table 4 and Figure 9 show how survey respondents rated the focal area impacts. Some impacts relate to multiple focal areas, so the survey results give a general idea of the respondent ratings. The focal area Economic and Employment Development is not included, as there were no projects classified under that focal area. Table 4 shows the results between the focal area counts and respondents’ view of which activities have positive impacts on patrons, organization, or staff. The focal area of Lifelong Learning emerged as the area with the most projects and also was aligned with the three top impact areas from the survey.

Table 4. Focal areas aligned with impact areas from survey

Impact area from survey	Count of impacts	Alignment with Focal Area
Participate in lifelong learning	545	Lifelong learning
Obtain materials/access to digital resources	523	Information access, Institutional capacity & Economic & Employment Development
Overcome barriers to academic achievement	415	Lifelong learning, Information access & Human services
Improve their literacy	316	Lifelong learning
Engage with their community	271	Civic engagement
Improves library operations	235	Institutional capacity
Expand access to technology	232	Information access & Institutional capacity
Engage in learning opportunities	123	Lifelong learning
Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills	123	Human Services
Improve skills in the library workforce	93	Institutional capacity
Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment	89	Economic & Employment Development

*Note: Combined positive impacts of activities on patrons, organization, or staff

Figure 9. Total number of times respondents indicated the seven library activities had these positive impacts on their patrons, organizations, or staff



A-3. Substantial groups

Evaluation question: Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for your Five-Year Plan activities? For the purposes of this question, a substantial focus would represent at least 10 percent of the total amount of resources committed by the overall plan across multiple years.

In Table 5, evaluators examined the number of projects and LSTA budget of the 41 projects attributed to each group. It should be noted that projects often benefit multiple groups. To determine which groups represented a substantial focus of Five-Year Plan activities, evaluators assigned projects to beneficiary groups, and often to more than one group per project or activity. The total budget for each project or activity was divided by the total amount of LSTA funds spent over the two available LSTA funding years (\$5,410,689) to arrive at the percentages in the table below.

Table 5. Analysis of groups with a substantial focus of LSTA plan activities*

Group	Projects	LSTA Budget	Percentage
Library workforce (current and future)	14	\$1,460,320.61	27%
Families	14	\$1,057,719.36	20%
School-aged youth (aged 6-17)	16	\$982,679.82	18%
Ethnic or minority populations	13	\$905,233.72	17%
Children (aged 0-5)	12	\$776,793.64	14%
Individuals with disabilities	4	\$752,609.18	14%
Immigrants/refugees	7	\$673,187.82	12%
Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills	7	\$560,536.20	10%
Individuals living below the poverty line	7	\$393,827.91	7%
Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed	1	\$75,410.99	1%

*Dollars and counts are higher than the total dollars and count of projects because projects were attributed to more than one beneficiary group.

Discussion of groups that meet the threshold and extent to which each group was reached

There were eight groups determined to be a substantial focus of LSTA activities in the evaluation period, based on meeting the threshold of at least 10 percent of the total of LSTA funding (\$5,410,689). The highest was library workforce (current and future), at 14 projects representing 27 percent of the funding pool. Other groups in the top five were *families* with 14 projects and 20 percent of the funding pool, *school-aged youth (aged 6–17)* with 16 projects and 18 percent of the funding pool, and *ethnic or minority populations* with 13 projects and 17 percent of the funding pool. *Individuals with disabilities* (four projects and 14 percent of the funding pool) and *children aged 0–5* (12 projects and 14 percent of the funding pool) both ranked fifth.

Library workforce (current and future)—14 projects

Projects with a substantial focus on the current and future library workforce totaled \$1,460,320 over 14 projects. The largest projects with a substantial focus on library workforce included MBTBL, Improving Library Services to Children and Youth, Building Library Capacity and Partnerships, and ELM instruction.

Families—14 projects

There were 14 projects totaling \$1,057,719 under this substantial group. The largest projects included Community Embedded Library Services Initiative, Building Library Capacity and Partnerships, Breaking Down Barriers to Family Literacy, and Improving Library Services to Children and Youth.

School-aged youth (aged 6–17)—16 projects

Projects with a substantial focus on school-aged youth (aged 6–17) totaled \$982,680. There were several projects overlapping with those in the families substantial group, as well as projects focusing on coding, countering geographic isolation, summer learning, and middle school learning.

Ethnic or minority populations—13 projects

Ethnic or minority populations were a substantial focus of 13 projects with LSTA budgets totaling \$905,233. In addition to previously noted projects such as Community Embedded Library Services Initiative and Building Library Capacity and Partnerships, significant projects for ethnic or minority populations included Expanding Community Services for the Somali and Latinx Communities in St. Paul, Mental Health Issues Impacting Women in Correctional Facilities, and Sustain, Grow and Evaluate Community-Informed Programming at the Saint Paul Public Library.

Individuals with disabilities—4 projects

There were four projects with a substantial focus on individuals with disabilities for a total of \$752,609. The majority of those funds went to MBTBL.

Children (aged 0–5)—12 projects

Children aged 0 to 5 were the substantial focus of 12 projects, with LSTA-funding totaling \$776,794. Many projects with a substantial focus on young children overlap with other substantial focus groups, including Community Embedded Library Services Initiative and Sustain, Grow and Evaluate Community-Informed Programming at the Saint Paul Public Library, as well as Breaking Down Barriers to Family Literacy and the Fairy and Folk Tale Festival.

Immigrants and refugees—7 projects

There were seven projects with a substantial focus on immigrants and refugees, totaling \$673,188 in LSTA funding. All projects overlapped with other substantial focus areas, including Breaking Down Barriers to Family Literacy, Expanding Community Services for the Somali and Latinx Communities in St. Paul, and Community-Embedded Library Service Initiative.

Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills—7 projects

The final substantial focus group was individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills, with seven projects and LSTA budgeted funds of \$560,536. As with other areas of substantial focus, these projects overlap with other categories. Larger projects in this focus area include Building Library Capacity and Partnerships, Community-Embedded Library Service Initiative, and Sustain, Grow and Evaluate Community-Informed Programming at the Saint Paul Public Library.

B. Process questions

B-1. Use of SPR data to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan

SLS used SPR data to track the number of projects and amount of funds allocated to activities that address each of the Five-Year Plan goals and subgoals. SLS also used SPR data to identify areas where more attention was necessary to meet goals and subgoals of the Five-Year Plan.

B-2. Changes made to the Five-Year Plan

SLS reported making no changes to the Five-Year Plan.

B-3. Sharing SPR data and evaluation resources

SLS reported sharing evaluation resources within their team, and with grantees. SLS also shares SPR data with regional and local library boards and with local government to help them better understand how their libraries fit within the larger state library system in Minnesota, or to demonstrate the value of having a library in their community.

C. Methodology

C-1: Implementation of an independent five-year evaluation

As a state agency, SLS is required to use the services provided by other state agencies when they are available, rather than hiring outside contractors. MAD is the State of Minnesota's in-house, fee-for-service management consulting group. MAD has more than 35 years of experience helping public managers increase their organizations' effectiveness and efficiency. MAD provides quality management consultation services to local, regional, state, and federal government agencies and public institutions. MAD evaluated the 2008–2012 and 2013–2017 Five-Year LSTA Plans and consulted in the development of the 2013–2017 Five-Year Plan. MAD's proposal and work plan to perform the 2018–2022 Five-Year Plan evaluation was accepted by SLS.

Jessica Burke, a Senior Management Consultant at MAD, worked with fellow MAD Senior Management Consultant Karen Gaides to design the strategy for conducting the Five-Year Plan evaluation. Gaides led the 2013–2017 Five-Year Plan evaluation and worked with SLS on the creation of the 2018–2022 plan. Burke led SLS staff, including the LSTA coordinator, state data coordinator, and state librarian, in gathering the required data and reports and in determining how to connect with library stakeholders. To ensure that stakeholder feedback was given freely, online surveys were sent through MAD communication channels and after presenting brief overviews at in-person focus groups, the state librarian or data coordinator were excused to encourage participants to share feedback openly. Ashley Johnson, another MAD Senior Management Consultant, performed much of the qualitative data analysis for the evaluation.

C-2: Types of statistical and qualitative methods used in conducting the five-year evaluation

Focus groups

In December 2021, MAD conducted three focus groups with stakeholders. The focus group discussion questions looked to gather information from program participants about the perceived effects of the main activities funded by LSTA funding in Minnesota. Three focus groups were held virtually, with a total of 12 participants in attendance.

Survey

In December 2021, MAD conducted the LSTA evaluation online survey, which was sent to a broad group of 2,270 stakeholders in the library community. The response rate for the survey was 6.5 percent (195 respondents). A copy of the focus group questions and the survey can be found in Appendix D.

Data review

In order to perform data and statistical analyses MAD consultants and SLS staff created a companion spreadsheet to the SPR reports with information taken from the primary fields needed for analysis from the SPR reporting. Other classifying information was added to the spreadsheet for each project to relate back to the

evaluation questions such as goal, subgoal, grant type, focal areas, intents, substantial groups (beneficiaries), LSTA funding, outputs, and narrative outcomes. Evaluators aggregated the information to produce data for findings in many sections of the report.

MAD consultants reviewed a number of other types of documents, which can be found in Appendix C.

C-3: Description and engagement of stakeholders in five-year evaluation

Focus group attendees represented a broad cross section of the library community in Minnesota. Attendees included staff and members from:

- Public libraries and schools who had applied for or received funding, and those who had not applied for competitive grants
- Multi-type and regional public library systems
- Academic and research libraries
- School media centers and special libraries, such as the MBTBL
- Professional organizations, such as the Minnesota Library Association and Information and Technology Educators of Minnesota (ITEM)

Holding the focus groups virtually allowed for people from different geographic locations to attend. A complete list of participants in the focus groups can be found in Appendix B.

Recipients of the survey are from a similar cross section of the library community in Minnesota. Some examples of sources for the survey email list include: LSTA grantee program administrators, public library directors, regional and multi-type system directors, school media specialists, youth services librarians, and SLS listserv recipients.

C-4: Sharing of key findings and recommendations

SLS will post the report on the SLS LSTA webpage and share it directly with Minnesota library stakeholders through their listserv and direct emails to library stakeholder groups. Additionally, SLS will provide the key findings and recommendations to the strategic planning committee to help inform and guide development of the 2023–2027 Five-Year LSTA Plan.

Appendix A: List of Acronyms and Terms

Acronyms

ELM: Electronic Library for Minnesota

IMLS: Institute of Museum and Library Services

ILL: Interlibrary Loan

LSTA: Library Services and Technology Act

MBTBL: Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library

SLS: State Library Services

SPR: State Program Report

General definitions and Minnesota-specific definitions

Library: Included are district and charter school media centers, public libraries, academic libraries, special libraries, regional public library systems, multi-county multi-type library system, learning resources centers, extension services, information and referral services, archives, and similar repositories.

Library system: A regional public library system is a multi-county public library service agency formed under Minnesota statutes by a joint powers agreement that provides free access to all residents of the region without discrimination. In Minnesota, there are six consolidated and six federated systems. A consolidated system is organized with one centralized administrative unit (and board) for libraries in that region. Federated regional systems provide shared services to public libraries that are operated by cities and counties. Each participating library in a federated library system maintains local financial and administrative autonomy.

A *multi-county, multi-type* library system is a multi-county cooperative network formed under Minnesota statutes and composed of any combination of public libraries, regional public library systems, public school libraries, public or private college or university libraries, state government libraries, special libraries, and any other libraries that share services and resources within a designated service area.

Minitex: Located at the University of Minnesota, Minitex is a cooperative organization that provides for resource sharing throughout the state and through grant agreements with the state library agency. Minitex administers statewide interlibrary loan and Ebooks Minnesota.

Appendix B: List of people interviewed

Table 1. Focus group attendees and organizations

Name	Organization
Stacy Lienemann	Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library System
Andrea Smith	Minnesota Department of Corrections
Annie M Wrigg	Pelican Rapids Public Library
Karen Pundsack	Great River Regional Library
Renee Grassi	Dakota County Library
Sarah Garbis	Hennepin County Library
Liz Lynch	Lake Agassiz Regional Library
Krista Ross	SELCO (Southeastern Libraries Cooperating)
Eric Billiet	Minnesota Department of Education
Jane Prestebak	Minnesota State University, Mankato—School Library and Information Studies program
Andi Bodeau	Osseo Area Schools
Ashley Krohn	Minneapolis Public Schools

Table 2. Group interviews

Name	Organization
Tami Lee	State Library Services (Minnesota)
Verena Getahun	State Library Services (Minnesota)
Leah Larson	State Library Services (Minnesota)
Ashley Bieber	State Library Services (Minnesota)
Hannah Buckland	State Library Services (Minnesota)
Catherine Durivage	State Library Services (Minnesota)
Sheila Oehrlein	State Library Services (Minnesota)
Maggie Snow	Minitex (University of Minnesota)
Gerri Moeller	Minitex (University of Minnesota)
Matt Lee	Minitex (University of Minnesota)
Nadine Jacobson	Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library
Corbb O’Connor	Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library
Dale Helzer	Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library
Marian Haslerud	Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library

Appendix C: Documents reviewed and financial information

Instructions and background documentation:

Guidelines for IMLS Grants to States Five-Year Evaluation

State of Minnesota LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018–2022

ILMS monthly evaluator meetings/recordings

Project related documentation

- A. Additional grantee/background information:
 - 1. MBTBL Accomplishments 2017–2019
 - 2. Ebooks MN—Environmental Assessment
 - 3. State Library Services Communication Audit (2018)
 - 4. State Library Services Communications Plan (2018)
- B. Websites:
 - 5. State Library Services: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/dse/Lib/sls/index.htm>
 - 6. MBTBL: <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/fam/mbtbl/index.htm>
 - 7. ILL: <https://www.minitex.umn.edu/>
- C. Expenditures spreadsheets:
 - 8. LSTA Expenditures for FFY 2018 SPR Projects
 - 9. LSTA Expenditures for FFY 2019 SPR Projects
- D. Surveys of participants in 11 State Library Services staff-led trainings, webinars, meetups, and resource sharing events in FY 2018–2019
 - 10. All Are Welcome
 - 11. All Are Welcome
 - 12. Indigenous Representations Workshops
 - 13. Libraries Without Borders
 - 14. Census Workshop
 - 15. Meetup
 - 16. Voting Webinar
 - 17. Power of Play
 - 18. Project READY (end of part one)
 - 19. Supercharged Storytimes Impact
 - 20. Early Childhood Resources, Funding, and Training
- E. Grantee reports for each of the 41 projects with LSTA funding during the evaluation period
 - 21. Building Library Capacity and Partnerships (2018)
 - 22. All Are Welcome: The Role of Libraries in Advancing Racial Equity
 - 23. Statewide Interlibrary Loan and Delivery
 - 24. Electronic Library of Minnesota (ELM) Instruction
 - 25. Ebooks Minnesota

March 29, 2022

26. Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (2018)
27. Promoting Summer Learning Access through Portable Library Project
28. Youth Worker for Tweens and Teens Afterschool
29. Community-Embedded Library Service (CELS) Initiative (2018)
30. Expanding Community Services for the Somali and Latinx Communities in Saint Paul
31. Breaking Down Barriers to Family Literacy
32. Digital Storytelling
33. Coding & Literacy Fusion in SPPS Elementary Libraries
34. Field Trips—Real & Virtual
35. Council of Academic Library Directors Cooperative Collection Management Project
36. Improving Library Services to Children and Youth (2018)
37. Getting Past Play: Engaging learners in purposeful use of library
38. Libraries Are Full of Stories.... What's Yours? Increasing Student Voice in the Library
39. Universal Academy Charter School Library and Media Center
40. It's a Virtual World, and We Want to Explore! Partnering to Share VR Tools across our School Libraries
41. Middle School Engagement and Creation Centers 2.0—Taking the Next Step in Coding and Robotics
42. Discover STEAM Garden
43. Digital Media Lab and Makerspace Coordinator to Develop Innovative Approaches to Digital Inclusion for All Ages
44. Hot Spot and/or Mobile Device Loan Program
45. Strengthening Library Go Partnership
46. Libraries Without Borders Partnership
47. Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (2019)
48. Advancing Equity in Minnesota Libraries
49. Developing Public Library and Reading Connections with Onsite Correctional Facility Book Clubs
50. Resource Sharing
51. Hallett Memorial Library Emergency Response
52. Community Embedded Library Services Initiative (2019)
53. Improving Library Services to Children and Youth (2019)
54. Sustain, Grow and Evaluate Community-Informed Programming at the Saint Paul Public Library
55. Mental Health Issues Impacting Women in Correctional Facilities
56. Memory Loss Resource Center: Library Services for People Living with Dementia within the Viking Library System
57. Indigenous Representations
58. ELM Instruction
59. Building Library Capacity and Partnerships (2019)
60. Fairy and Folk Tale Festival
61. Literacy and Life Skills for Incarcerated Patrons

Table 1. List of Minnesota SPR Projects/Activities FFY18-FFY19

Project	FY	Goal	Grantee	Grant Type
Building Library Capacity and Partnerships	2018	A	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
All Are Welcome: The Role of Libraries in Advancing Racial Equity	2018	C	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
Statewide Interlibrary Loan and Delivery	2018	A	University of Minnesota— Twin Cities	Academic
Electronic Library of Minnesota (ELM) Instruction	2018	E	University of Minnesota— Twin Cities	Academic
eBooks Minnesota	2018	A	University of Minnesota— Twin Cities	Academic
Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library	2018	A	Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library	Public
Promoting Summer Learning Access through Portable Library Project	2018	C	South Saint Paul Public Library	Public
Youth Worker for Tweens and Teens Afterschool	2018	A	Cloquet Public Library	Public
Community-Embedded Library Service (CELS) Initiative	2018	C	Hennepin County Library	Public
Expanding Community Services for the Somali and Latinx Communities in Saint Paul	2018	C	Saint Paul Public Library	Public
Breaking Down Barriers to Family Literacy	2018	C	Great River Regional Library	Public
Digital Storytelling	2018	E	Ramsey County Library	Public
Coding & Literacy Fusion in SPPS Elementary Libraries	2018	E	Saint Paul Public Schools	School
Field Trips—Real & Virtual	2018	A	Tri-County Schools ISD 2358	School
Council of Academic Library Directors Cooperative Collection Management Project	2018	A	University of Minnesota- Duluth	Academic
Improving Library Services to Children and Youth	2018	B	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
Getting Past Play: Engaging learners in purposeful use of library	2018	E	Waconia School District, ISD110	School
Libraries Are Full of Stories.... What's Yours? Increasing Student Voice in the Library	2019	C	Owatonna Public Schools— ISD 671	School
Universal Academy Charter School Library and Media Center	2019	E	Universal Academy Charter School	School
It's a Virtual World, and We Want to Explore! Partnering to Share VR Tools across our School Libraries	2019	E	Central Minnesota Library Exchange	Consortia
Middle School Engagement and Creation Centers 2.0— Taking the Next Step in Coding and Robotics	2019	A	Osseo School District, ISD279	School
Discover STEAM Garden	2019	B	Ramsey County Library	Public
Digital Media Lab and Makerspace Coordinator to Develop Innovative Approaches to Digital Inclusion for All Ages	2019	E	Fergus Falls Public Library	Public
Hot Spot and/or Mobile Device Loan Program	2019	E	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
Strengthening Library Go Partnership	2019	B	Saint Paul Public Schools	School

March 29, 2022

Project	FY	Goal	Grantee	Grant Type
Libraries Without Borders Partnership	2019	A	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library	2019	A	Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library	Public
Advancing Equity in Minnesota Libraries	2019	C	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
Developing Public Library and Reading Connections with Onsite Correctional Facility Book Clubs	2019	A	Ramsey County Library	Public
Resource Sharing	2019	A	University of Minnesota— Twin Cities	Academic
Hallett Memorial Library Emergency Response	2019	A	Crosby: Jessie F. Hallett Memorial Library	Public
Community Embedded Library Services Initiative	2019	C	Hennepin County Library	Public
Improving Library Services to Children and Youth	2019	B	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
Sustain, Grow and Evaluate Community-Informed Programming at the Saint Paul Public Library	2019	C	Saint Paul Public Library	Public
Mental Health Issues Impacting Women in Correctional Facilities	2019	C	Friends of Hennepin County Library	Public
Memory Loss Resource Center: Library Services for People Living with Dementia within the Viking Library System	2019	A	Douglas County Library	Public
Indigenous Representations	2019	C	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
ELM Instruction	2019	E	University of Minnesota— Twin Cities	Academic
Building Library Capacity and Partnerships	2019	A	State Library Services— Minnesota Department of Education	SLAA
Fairy and Folk Tale Festival	2019	B	Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library	Public
Literacy and Life Skills for Incarcerated Patrons	2019	A	Waseca-Le Sueur Regional Library	Public

Appendix D: Research instruments for focus groups, survey, and group interviews

LSTA evaluation focus group questions

Facilitator gives introduction on goals and process with focus group and MAD confidentiality statement and “working agreements” in session.

Introductions/Background

1. Introductions
 - Name
 - Organization and role
2. Background information
 - State Library Services Overview
 - Overview of efforts funded by LSTA dollars
 - Brief explanation of federal vs. state funding
3. Review of LSTA goals and related projects from Minnesota LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018–2022

Discussion Questions—LSTA Funding for Programs and Services:

4. Thinking back over the past 3 years, how well were the state LSTA goals (above) aligned with your organization’s and patrons’ needs?
5. World’s best workforce includes:
 - Activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families/caregivers, examples: workshops with the Children’s Museum of Minnesota (Power of Play and Playful Learning), Every Child Ready to Read 2 workshops, Supercharged Storytimes, and early literacy bookmarks and posters.
 - Activities that connect public libraries and schools, examples: the 90-Second Newbery Film Festival, summer meal program collaborations, and the Libraries Serving Youth Meetup.
 - a) How do “world’s best workforce activities” provide value to your organization and patrons?
 - b) Did you experience any barriers accessing these resources or programs?
 - c) **[Asked only of school group]** What additional resources or partnership could LSTA funding provide in the future for school libraries and people who work in school libraries?
6. Responding to diverse community needs includes:
 - Activities that support integrating equity, examples: Indigenous Representation workshops and collections, Project READY, and the “All Are Welcome: Advancing Racial Equity” workshops.
 - Programs and services delivered in collaboration with other organizations, examples: Resilient Communities exhibit by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Ebooks Minnesota Collective from Minitex, and Project READY with the Minnesota Library Association and Information Technology Educators of Minnesota.

- a) How do “responding to diverse community needs activities” provide value to your organization and patrons? How is LSTA funding helping to support immigrant, rural, and second-language communities?
 - b) Did you experience any barriers accessing these resources or programs?
7. LSTA grant making includes large and mini competitive grants and targeted grants to help Minnesota libraries carry out projects that address community needs, strengthen local libraries, and address one or more LSTA subgoals.
- a) How does LSTA grant making provide value to your organization and patrons?
 - b) Did you experience any barriers accessing LSTA grants? Do you have any feedback on the application, review process, communication, or training with LSTA grants?
8. Promoting barrier-free access includes:
- o Resource sharing, including interlibrary loan and shared e-content collections that meet the needs of people throughout the state.
 - o Increasing awareness of the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL), so more eligible Minnesotans participate in the program.
- Digital equity and literacy includes: Libraries Without Borders and working with Literacy Minnesota to develop a curriculum supporting parents and caregivers in learning to use their children’s school portals.
- a) How do activities to promote barrier-free access and digital equity and literacy activities provide value to your organization and patrons?
 - b) Did you experience any barriers accessing these resources or programs?
9. Future view
- If you could wave a magic wand, what would you/your organization like to see LSTA funding used for in the future?

LSTA evaluation group interview questions

State Library Services interview guide

1. Introductions: Please give your name and your role at SLS with LSTA-funded activities (MAD attendees introduce themselves with name and role also)
2. Overall (at a strategic level), how has SLS geared your work toward supporting the goals in the Five-Year Plan:
 - o Library services and policies promote barrier-free access
 - o Libraries contribute to the World’s Best Workforce
 - o Libraries respond to diverse community needs
 - o Library value is measured and demonstrated and Libraries facilitate digital equity and literacy
 - o How has SLS taken these goals into account in planning and implementing your activities and supports for libraries during the evaluation period?
3. Survey results show respondents generally agreed (ranging from more than 60 percent to around 90 percent) that the following activities provide value to their organizations and patrons, and strengthen Minnesota libraries:
 - o SLS-funded digital equity activities
 - o LSTA grant-funded projects
 - o SLS-funded activities that support integrating equity

- SLS-funded activities improve library services to children, youth, and families/caregivers
- SLS-funded activities connect public libraries and schools

However, for all of those activities, respondents were less likely to agree there were few barriers to accessing those grants, tools, resources, and activities.

- a) Do you know what any of these barriers are?
 - b) What can SLS do to ease some of these barriers?
4. What activities has SLS engaged in to support Goal D, “Library value is demonstrated and measured”?
 - a) Specifically, how has SLS demonstrated progress on D1, “performance measures and outcomes” with SPR data, communication plan, and annual reporting? For example, adjusting measures on the annual report to tell their stories or new measures to address COVID?
 - b) How has SLS demonstrated progress on D2, “Marketing” with the communication and newsletter? Have you made any changes based on results of the communication plan audit from July 2018? For example, increasing newsletter content about small and rural public libraries, or adding website content with guidance about statutes, grant, and state aid applications?
 5. How have you used the previous Five-Year Evaluation to inform the data collected for the current Five-Year Evaluation?
 - a) How have you used this information throughout this five-year cycle?
 - b) How have you used lessons learned from the previous Five-Year Plan activities to improve support for the current Five-Year Plan activities?
 6. What future needs do you think SLS should be addressing with LSTA funds?

Minitex interview guide

We’re going to cover several topics today, including funding and reporting, progress on Five-Year Plan goals for Minitex, and a look toward future need.

1. First, can you tell me about your role with Minitex and your involvement with LSTA-funded activities?
 - a) Which Minitex resources or services depend the most on LSTA funding?
2. Are there other activities that depend less on LSTA funding? What are those?
3. Can you tell us about how you report to State Library Services (SLS) on your activities, especially LSTA-funded activities?

Barriers to access and increasing awareness

4. Looking now at barriers, survey results show more than 80 percent of respondents strongly agree that interlibrary loans provide value to their organizations, staff, and patrons, and strengthen Minnesota’s libraries, while only 19.2 percent strongly agreed there are few barriers to accessing interlibrary loan. Are you aware of what barriers individuals face in using interlibrary loans? If so, what are they?
5. What do you think Minitex could do to ease barriers library staff and patrons face in accessing interlibrary loans?
6. Can you tell me about what you have done in the evaluation period to improve or enhance communication and marketing of (LSTA-funded) resources and services?
7. One activity mentioned in the Five-Year Plan is assuring equity in distribution of resources and services. What has Minitex done to address equity in the evaluation period?

- a) Are there barriers you've faced in working toward equitable distribution of resources and services? If so, what are they?

Improvement and future needs

8. Looking ahead to the next Five-Year Plan and beyond, how do you think SLS can improve equity and outreach activities with LSTA funds overall?
9. How can SLS improve its support for the activities Minitex carries out using LSTA funding, including providing interlibrary loan and delivery services to public and school libraries as well as to hospitals and museums; delivering to patrons' home library through the Minitex delivery system; staffing a help desk for patrons using the MNLINK statewide virtual library; and providing webinars and other library workforce training.?
10. What future needs at Minitex might shift the focus of how LSTA funding should be used?
 - a) What do you think SLS should be addressing with LSTA funds?
11. If you had a magic wand, what one thing would you do to improve LSTA-funded activities?

Minnesota Braille and Talking Book interview guide

We're going to cover several topics today, including funding and reporting, progress on Five-Year Plan goals for MBTBL, and a look toward future need.

1. First, can you tell me about your role with MBTBL and your involvement with LSTA-funded activities?
2. Are you aware of how MBTBL uses LSTA funding?

Barriers to access and lack of awareness

3. Looking now at barriers, survey results showed more than 60 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree that MBTBL's activities strengthen Minnesota's libraries, but only 14 percent agreed or strongly agreed there are few barriers to accessing MBTBL. Are you aware of what barriers individuals face in using MBTBL? If so, what are they?
4. In the focus groups MAD conducted and in survey results, there was a lack of awareness about MBTBL. A few focus group participants said they forget about MBTBL, and nearly 40 percent of survey respondents chose "I don't know" or "not applicable" when asked if MBTBL provides value to their organization or patrons.
 - a) What do you think MBTBL can do to improve awareness of its services?
 - b) What has MBTBL done in the evaluation period to improve or enhance communication and marketing of its resources and services?
5. One activity mentioned in the Five-Year Plan is staff training in digital technology, accessibility, early literacy, and customer service. What has MBTBL done to address this activity in the evaluation period?
 - a) Are there barriers MBTBL has faced in working toward this goal? If so, what are they?

Improvement and future needs

6. Looking ahead to the next Five-Year Plan, and beyond, how can SLS improve its support for MBTBL's LSTA-funded activities??
7. What future needs at MBTBL should SLS be addressing with LSTA funds?
8. If you had a magic wand, what one thing would you do to improve MBTBL LSTA-funded activities?

LSTA evaluation survey instrument

The State of Minnesota LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018–2022 identifies Minnesota libraries’ current needs and goals. All Minnesota LSTA funds, including competitive grants, are used to address one or more of the following 12 subgoals in the plan.

Please rank the top three LSTA Five-Year Plan subgoal(s) that have most closely reflected the needs of your patrons, organizations, and library staff between October 1, 2017, and today, with 1 being most important, 2 being second-most important, and 3 third-most important.

LSTA Five-Year Plan Subgoal	1	2	3
Resource Sharing, including interlibrary loan and shared e-content collections that meet the needs of people throughout the state.			
Reducing Barriers to Access Grant Making: Provide opportunities for local communities to identify barriers to access and develop innovative responses that improve access to library services, programs, and/or materials.			
Increase awareness of the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL), so more eligible Minnesotans participate in the program.			
Youth Programs and Services—Birth to 18: Create connections between public libraries, schools, and school libraries to strengthen supports for youth and their families.			
Libraries and the World’s Best Workforce Grant Making: Support creative projects and innovative services through competitive, sole source, and/or targeted grants. Encourage smaller libraries to develop modest programs that address local needs and capacity for grant management.			
Connecting Communities: Strengthen partnerships with library peers and allied organizations. Connect library staff with key information on timely topics via webinars, conference presentations, and targeted communications.			
Integrating Equity: Increase the understanding and adoption of equity as a core facet of library services.			
Promoting Equity through Grant Making: Provide resources for local, regional, or statewide projects that address concerns about equity in library services, programs, staffing, and/or operations.			

LSTA Five-Year Plan Subgoal	1	2	3
Performance Measures and Outcomes: Communicate library value in more consistent, interesting, and engaging ways. Includes collaboration, training, and technical assistance.			
Marketing: Increase SLS’s capacity to promote its programs to the state’s library community. Promote marketing techniques for libraries to more effectively communicate their impact in the community.			
Improving Technology Services: Support efforts to improve digital and information literacy and to promote broadband adoption.			
Advancing Digital Literacy through Grant Making: Provide local libraries an opportunity to identify and address the need for digital literacy in the community.			

LSTA-funded programs and services

LSTA funding supports Interlibrary Loan, the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library, and other statewide programs and services such as professional development/training for library staff.

Your feedback on how these programs benefit your patrons, organization or staff will help State Library Services to evaluate progress toward the Five-Year Plan goals and plan for the future.

Interlibrary Loan

LSTA funds support a portion of interlibrary loan services through Minitex. Interlibrary loan allows patrons of participating Minnesota libraries to access a wide array of information resources in a range of formats whenever and wherever the information is needed.

Please select your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know	Not applicable
Interlibrary loan provides value to my organization, including staff.							
Interlibrary loan provides value to my patrons.							

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
Interlibrary loan activities strengthen Minnesota's libraries.							
There are few barriers to accessing interlibrary loan.							

Which of the following positive impacts does interlibrary loan have on your patrons, organization, or staff?
(Choose up to three)

- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.
- Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.
- Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.
- Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.
- Expands their access to technology.
- Improves their skills in the library workforce.
- Improves library operations.
- Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.
- Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.
- Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.
- None of the above.

Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL)

MBTBL is a program of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled. The library provides direct library service to patrons of all ages with visual, physical, or reading disabilities for whom conventional print is a barrier to reading.

Please select your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
MBTBL provides value to my organization, including staff.							

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
MBTBL provides value to my patrons.							
MBTBL activities strengthen Minnesota's libraries.							
There are few barriers to accessing MBTBL.							

Which of the following positive impacts does MBTBL have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)

- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.
- Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.
- Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.
- Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.
- Expands their access to technology.
- Improves their skills in the library workforce.
- Improves library operations.
- Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.
- Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.
- Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.
- None of the above.

Activities that support integrating equity

SLS supports libraries in their efforts to recruit and maintain diverse staff that reflect communities served. SLS strives to identify and reduce or eliminate any ways in which its operations reflect institutional or structural racism, and contribute to more equitable library services across the state. Examples: Indigenous Representation workshops and collections, Project READY, and All Are Welcome: Advancing Racial Equity workshops, from the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE).

Please select your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
SLS-funded activities that support integrating equity provide value to my organization, including staff.							
SLS-funded activities that support integrating equity provide value to my patrons.							
SLS-funded activities that support integrating equity strengthen Minnesota's libraries.							
There are few barriers to SLS-funded activities that help libraries integrate equity.							

Which of the following positive impacts does integrating equity have on your patrons, organization, or staff?
(Choose up to three)

- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.
- Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.
- Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.
- Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.
- Expands their access to technology.
- Improves their skills in the library workforce.
- Improves library operations.
- Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.
- Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.
- Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.
- None of the above.

Activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families/caregivers

SLS staff coordinate professional development, programs and resources to improve library services to children, youth and families/caregivers. Examples: workshops with the Children Museum of Minnesota (Power of Play and Playful Learning), Supercharged Storytimes, and early literacy bookmarks and posters.

Please select your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
SLS-funded activities that improve library services to children, youth and families/caregivers provide value to my organization, including staff.							
SLS-funded activities that improve library services to children, youth and families/caregivers provide value to my patrons.							
SLS-funded activities that improve library services to children, youth and families/caregivers strengthen Minnesota's libraries.							
There are few barriers to SLS-funded activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families/caregivers.							

Which of the following positive impacts do SLS-funded activities improving library services to children, youth, and families/caregivers have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)

- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.
- Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.
- Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.
- Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.
- Expands their access to technology.

- Improves their skills in the library workforce.
- Improves library operations.
- Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.
- Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.
- Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.
- None of the above.

Activities that connect public libraries and schools

SLS staff develop and coordinate programs and professional development opportunities designed to connect Minnesota’s public schools and libraries. Examples: 90-Second Newbery Film Festival, summer meal program collaborations, and the Libraries Serving Youth Meetup.

Please select your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
SLS-funded activities that connect public libraries and schools provide value to my organization, including staff.							
SLS-funded activities that connect public libraries and schools provide value to my patrons.							
SLS-funded activities that connect public libraries and schools strengthen Minnesota’s libraries.							
There are few barriers to accessing activities that connect public libraries and schools.							

Which of the following positive impacts do SLS-funded activities that connect public libraries and schools have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)

- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.
- Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.
- Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.

- Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.
- Expands their access to technology.
- Improves their skills in the library workforce.
- Improves library operations.
- Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.
- Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.
- Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.
- None of the above.

Activities that support digital equity

SLS staff provide local libraries with an opportunity to identify and address the need for digital access, literacy, and inclusion in the community. Examples: eBooks Minnesota Collection from Minitex, and hot spots and mobile devices for circulation.

Please select your level of agreement, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, for each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
SLS-funded digital equity activities provide value to my organization, including staff.							
SLS-funded digital equity activities provide value to my patrons.							
SLS-funded digital equity activities strengthen Minnesota's libraries.							
There are few barriers to accessing SLS-funded digital equity tools and resources.							

Which of the following positive impacts do SLS-funded digital equity activities have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)

- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.
- Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.
- Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.

- Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.
- Expands their access to technology.
- Improves their skills in the library workforce.
- Improves library operations.
- Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.
- Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.
- Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.
- None of the above.

LSTA Grant Making

Large or mini competitive grants and targeted grants help Minnesota libraries carry out projects that address community needs, strengthen local libraries and address one or more LSTA subgoals.

Please select your level of agreement, from strongly agree to strongly disagree, for each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
LSTA grant-funded projects provide value to my organization, including staff.							
LSTA grant-funded projects provide value to my patrons.							
LSTA grant-funded projects strengthen Minnesota's libraries.							
There are few barriers to accessing LSTA grant awards.							

Which of the following positive impacts does accessing LSTA grant awards have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)

- Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.
- Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.
- Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.
- Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.
- Expands their access to technology.

- Improves their skills in the library workforce.
- Improves library operations.
- Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.
- Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.
- Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.
- None of the above.

Please indicate your organization’s level of experience with Minnesota’s LSTA grant-funded projects.

Since October 1, 2017, my organization has:

- Applied for and received a competitive LSTA grant.
- Applied for a competitive LSTA grant, but did not receive one.
- Received a mini grant or targeted LSTA grant.
- Not applied for a competitive LSTA grant.
- I don’t know.

Why did your organization not apply for a competitive LSTA grant (Select all that apply)?

- Lacked resources/staff to complete grant application and process.
- Grant opportunity did not seem applicable to my organization’s or community’s needs.
- Did not feel we would have an appropriate project.
- Did not understand requirements and process well enough.
- The dollar amount available wasn't sufficient.
- I don’t know.
- Other, please specify:

Competitive LSTA Grant Awards since October 1, 2017—Selection and Application process

SLS staff and the Grant Services divisions of the Minnesota Department of Education coordinate the competitive LSTA grant application and selection process. Thinking about your experience with the LSTA’s grant making, please select your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know	Not applicable
The competitive LSTA grant awards are beneficial to my organization or other organizations I am familiar with.							
I understand how to apply for a competitive LSTA grant.							

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
The competitive LSTA grant award selection process is clear.							
Sufficient support (such as instruction or training) is available for applying for competitive LSTA grants.							
I receive enough communication about open competitive LSTA grant opportunities, the selection process and grant projects awards.							

Targeted and mini grant LSTA Grant Awards since October 1, 2017—Selection and Application process

SLS staff and the Grant Services divisions of the Minnesota Department of Education coordinate the targeted and mini-grant LSTA grant process. Thinking about your experience with the LSTA's grant-making, please select your level of agreement or disagreement with each statement below.

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
The targeted or mini LSTA grant awards are beneficial to my organization or other organizations I am familiar with.							
I understand how to apply for a targeted or mini LSTA grant.							
Sufficient support (such as instruction or training) is							

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Not applicable
available for applying for targeted or mini LSTA grants.							
I receive enough communication about targeted or mini LSTA grant opportunities, the application process and grant projects awards.							

Future needs

Looking ahead to 2022, what are your community's greatest needs? (Choose up to three)

- Access to information (physical and digital resources).
- Access to technology and broadband.
- Adult literacy, including English-language learning.
- Early literacy, including kindergarten readiness.
- Media literacy, including combating misinformation.
- Immigrant and refugee services.
- Advances in racial equity.
- Improved services for people living in poverty.
- Library workforce development.
- Services for lifelong learners, including seniors.
- Support for learners, including K-12 students.
- Workforce development, including digital literacy.

Why do these needs stand out?

What other support would you like to see from State Library Services in the future?

Demographic questions

What best describes your location?

- Rural
- Urban
- Suburban

What best describes the type of library or library system at which you work? (Select all that apply)

- Public library
- Public school, including charter, library
- Regional library system, multi-county, multi-type library system, or other library cooperative
- Academic library

March 29, 2022

- Special library (not-for-profit law, historical, tribal, medical, etc.)
- State agency library
- Library friends organization
- Other, please specify:

Is there anything else you would like to share with SLS about LSTA-funded activities you have experience with in the evaluation period (October 1, 2017, through today)?

Appendix E: Additional output of statistical findings

Demographics of survey respondents

The largest segment of survey respondents was from rural Minnesota at 40 percent, with one-third from suburban areas and just more than one-fourth from urban areas. More than half of survey respondents (62 percent) said they work in public libraries, with 17 percent in public school libraries (including charter schools), and 16 percent from regional library systems, multi-county, multi-type library system, or other library cooperative.

Table 1. Location of survey respondents

What best describes your location?	Number of survey respondents	Percentage of survey respondents
Rural	72	40.4%
Urban	47	26.4%
Suburban	59	33.1%

Table 2. Library or organizations type where respondents work

What best describes the type of library or library system at which you work? (Select all that apply)	Number of survey respondents	Percentage of survey respondents
Public library	108	62.1%
Public school, including charter, library	29	16.7%
Regional library system, multi-county, multi-type library system, or other library cooperative	27	15.5%
Academic library	10	5.7%
Special library (not-for-profit law, historical, tribal, medical, etc.)	6	3.4%
State agency library	3	1.7%
Library friends organization	2	1.1%
Other	7	4.0%

Additional tables

Interlibrary loan provides value to my organization, including staff.	#	%
Strongly agree	156	80.4%
Agree	17	8.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	5.7%
Disagree	2	1.0%
Strongly disagree	1	0.5%
I don't know	2	1.0%
Not applicable	5	2.6%

Interlibrary loan provides value to my patrons.	#	%
Strongly agree	159	82.0%
Agree	18	9.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	3.6%
Disagree	1	0.5%
Strongly disagree	3	1.5%
I don't know	0	0.0%
Not applicable	6	3.1%

Interlibrary loan activities strengthen Minnesota's libraries.	#	%
Strongly agree	164	84.5%
Agree	23	11.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	4	2.1%
Disagree	1	0.5%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	0	0.0%
Not applicable	2	1.0%

There are few barriers to accessing interlibrary loan.	#	%
Strongly agree	37	19.2%
Agree	78	40.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	38	19.7%
Disagree	20	10.4%
Strongly disagree	5	2.6%
I don't know	12	6.2%
Not applicable	3	1.6%

Which of the following positive impacts does interlibrary loan have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)	#	%
Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.	87	45.8%
Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.	138	72.6%
Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.	157	82.6%
Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.	25	13.2%
Expands their access to technology.	15	7.9%
Improves their skills in the library workforce.	10	5.3%
Improves library operations.	53	27.9%
Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.	8	4.2%
Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.	12	6.3%
Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.	16	8.4%
None of the above.	8	4.2%

March 29, 2022

MBTBL provides value to my organization, including staff.	#	%
Strongly agree	20	10.4%
Agree	56	29.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	37	19.2%
Disagree	2	1.0%
Strongly disagree	2	1.0%
I don't know	36	18.7%
Not applicable	40	20.7%

MBTBL provides value to my patrons.	#	%
Strongly agree	37	19.2%
Agree	46	23.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	30	15.5%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	3	1.6%
I don't know	39	20.2%
Not applicable	38	19.7%

MBTBL activities strengthen Minnesota's libraries.	#	%
Strongly agree	50	25.9%
Agree	69	35.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	20	10.4%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	1	0.5%
I don't know	30	15.5%
Not applicable	23	11.9%

There are few barriers to accessing MBTBL.	#	%
Strongly agree	7	3.6%
Agree	20	10.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	51	26.4%
Disagree	18	9.3%
Strongly disagree	6	3.1%
I don't know	65	33.7%
Not applicable	26	13.5%

Which of the following positive impacts does MBTBL have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)	#	%
Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.	43	26.2%
Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.	86	52.4%
Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.	77	47.0%
Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.	25	15.2%
Expands their access to technology.	23	14.0%
Improves their skills in the library workforce.	1	0.6%
Improves library operations.	15	9.1%
Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.	7	4.3%
Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.	5	3.0%
Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.	34	20.7%
None of the above.	51	31.1%

SLS-funded activities that support integrating equity provide value to my organization, including staff.	#	%
Strongly agree	55	30.1%
Agree	69	37.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	24	13.1%
Disagree	2	1.1%
Strongly disagree	1	0.5%
I don't know	20	10.9%
Not applicable	12	6.6%

SLS-funded activities that support integrating equity provide value to my patrons.	#	%
Strongly agree	54	29.5%
Agree	62	33.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	27	14.8%
Disagree	2	1.1%
Strongly disagree	1	0.5%
I don't know	23	12.6%
Not applicable	14	7.7%

SLS-funded activities that support integrating equity strengthen Minnesota's libraries.	#	%
Strongly agree	75	41.2%
Agree	63	34.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	16	8.8%
Disagree	1	0.5%
Strongly disagree	1	0.5%
I don't know	18	9.9%
Not applicable	8	4.4%

There are few barriers to SLS-funded activities that help libraries integrate equity.	#	%
Strongly agree	18	10.0%
Agree	41	22.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	50	27.8%
Disagree	18	10.0%
Strongly disagree	1	0.6%
I don't know	44	24.4%
Not applicable	8	4.4%

Which of the following positive impacts does integrating equity have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)	#	%
Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.	61	37.4%
Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.	64	39.3%
Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.	53	32.5%
Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.	33	20.2%
Expands their access to technology.	31	19.0%
Improves their skills in the library workforce.	34	20.9%
Improves library operations.	47	28.8%
Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.	22	13.5%
Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.	7	4.3%
Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.	55	33.7%
None of the above.	19	11.7%

SLS-funded activities that improve library services to children, youth and families/caregivers provide value to my organization, including staff.	#	%
Strongly agree	71	39.4%
Agree	62	34.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	10	5.6%
Disagree	6	3.3%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	10	5.6%
Not applicable	21	11.7%

SLS-funded activities that improve library services to children, youth and families/caregivers provide value to my patrons.	#	%
Strongly agree	70	38.9%
Agree	61	33.9%
Neither agree nor disagree	12	6.7%
Disagree	5	2.8%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	10	5.6%
Not applicable	22	12.2%

SLS-funded activities that improve library services to children, youth and families/caregivers strengthen Minnesota's libraries.	#	%
Strongly agree	86	48.0%
Agree	55	30.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	9	5.0%
Disagree	3	1.7%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	10	5.6%
Not applicable	16	8.9%

There are few barriers to accessing activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families/caregivers.	#	%
Strongly agree	24	13.3%
Agree	54	30.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	38	21.1%
Disagree	12	6.7%
Strongly disagree	4	2.2%
I don't know	30	16.7%
Not applicable	18	10.0%

Which of the following positive impacts do SLS-funded activities improving library services to children, youth, and families/caregivers have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)	#	%
Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.	52	30.8%
Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.	86	50.9%
Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.	44	26.0%
Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.	83	49.1%
Expands their access to technology.	14	8.3%
Improves their skills in the library workforce.	15	8.9%
Improves library operations.	17	10.1%
Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.	3	1.8%
Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.	83	49.1%
Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.	44	26.0%
None of the above.	16	9.5%

SLS-funded activities that connect public libraries and schools provide value to my organization, including staff.	#	%
Strongly agree	54	30.2%
Agree	63	35.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	17	9.5%
Disagree	7	3.9%
Strongly disagree	2	1.1%
I don't know	17	9.5%
Not applicable	19	10.6%

SLS-funded activities that connect public libraries and schools provide value to my patrons.	#	%
Strongly agree	61	33.9%
Agree	53	29.4%
Neither agree nor disagree	19	10.6%
Disagree	8	4.4%
Strongly disagree	1	0.6%
I don't know	18	10.0%
Not applicable	20	11.1%

SLS-funded activities that connect public libraries and schools strengthen Minnesota's libraries.	#	%
Strongly agree	70	39.1%
Agree	54	30.2%
Neither agree nor disagree	17	9.5%
Disagree	6	3.4%
Strongly disagree	1	0.6%
I don't know	18	10.1%
Not applicable	13	7.3%

There are few barriers to accessing activities that connect public libraries and schools.	#	%
Strongly agree	12	6.8%
Agree	47	26.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	37	20.9%
Disagree	27	15.3%
Strongly disagree	3	1.7%
I don't know	38	21.5%
Not applicable	13	7.3%

Which of the following positive impacts do SLS-funded activities that connect public libraries and schools have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)	#	%
Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.	72	44.7%
Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.	58	36.0%
Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.	64	39.8%
Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.	49	30.4%
Expands their access to technology.	25	15.5%
Improves their skills in the library workforce.	15	9.3%
Improves library operations.	21	13.0%
Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.	8	5.0%
Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.	11	6.8%
Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.	53	32.9%
None of the above.	24	14.9%

March 29, 2022

SLS-funded digital equity activities provide value to my organization, including staff.	#	%
Strongly agree	92	51.4%
Agree	61	34.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	6.1%
Disagree	2	1.1%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	5	2.8%
Not applicable	8	4.5%

SLS-funded digital equity activities provide value to my patrons.	#	%
Strongly agree	98	55.1%
Agree	56	31.5%
Neither agree nor disagree	9	5.1%
Disagree	2	1.1%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	5	2.8%
Not applicable	8	4.5%

SLS-funded digital equity activities strengthen Minnesota's libraries.	#	%
Strongly agree	112	63.6%
Agree	47	26.7%
Neither agree nor disagree	7	4.0%
Disagree	1	0.6%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	5	2.8%
Not applicable	4	2.3%

There are few barriers to accessing digital equity tools and resources.	#	%
Strongly agree	28	16.0%
Agree	56	32.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	34	19.4%
Disagree	30	17.1%
Strongly disagree	5	2.9%
I don't know	18	10.3%
Not applicable	4	2.3%

Which of the following positive impacts do SLS-funded digital equity activities have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)	#	%
Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.	76	44.7%
Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.	63	37.1%
Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.	92	54.1%
Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.	62	36.5%
Expands their access to technology.	108	63.5%
Improves their skills in the library workforce.	2	1.2%
Improves library operations.	16	9.4%
Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.	32	18.8%
Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.	2	1.2%
Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.	12	7.1%
None of the above.	9	5.3%

LSTA grant-funded projects provide value to my organization, including staff.	#	%
Strongly agree	76	42.9%
Agree	36	20.3%
Neither agree nor disagree	23	13.0%
Disagree	6	3.4%
Strongly disagree	1	0.6%
I don't know	20	11.3%
Not applicable	15	8.5%

LSTA grant-funded projects provide value to my patrons.	#	%
Strongly agree	76	43.2%
Agree	37	21.0%
Neither agree nor disagree	20	11.4%
Disagree	6	3.4%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	22	12.5%
Not applicable	15	8.5%

LSTA grant-funded projects strengthen Minnesota's libraries.	#	%
Strongly agree	93	52.8%
Agree	46	26.1%
Neither agree nor disagree	11	6.3%
Disagree	0	0.0%
Strongly disagree	0	0.0%
I don't know	20	11.4%
Not applicable	6	3.4%

March 29, 2022

There are few barriers to accessing LSTA grant awards.	#	%
Strongly agree	22	12.4%
Agree	47	26.6%
Neither agree nor disagree	32	18.1%
Disagree	22	12.4%
Strongly disagree	9	5.1%
I don't know	40	22.6%
Not applicable	5	2.8%

Which of the following positive impacts does accessing LSTA grant awards have on your patrons, organization, or staff? (Choose up to three)	#	%
Helps them overcome barriers to academic achievement.	24	15.9%
Helps them to participate in lifelong learning.	50	33.1%
Helps them discover information resources, or obtains materials (physical or digital) for them.	36	23.8%
Improves their literacy (including digital and 21st century literacy) skills.	39	25.8%
Expands their access to technology.	47	31.1%
Improves their skills in the library workforce.	16	10.6%
Improves library operations.	66	43.7%
Supports their efforts to find and succeed in employment.	9	6.0%
Provides information that furthers their parenting and family skills.	3	2.0%
Provides them with the opportunity to engage with their community.	57	37.7%
None of the above.	20	13.2%

Appendix F: Summaries of qualitative analyses

Focus groups

LSTA goals

MAD conducted three focus groups with 12 library stakeholders from around the state. Just over one-third of focus group participants said the LSTA goals aligned well with their organization's and patrons' needs. These participants often said that strategic planning efforts within their organizations identified the same goals as LSTA goals. Participants also noted that, while their organizations focus on LSTA goals at different times throughout implementation, and while their organization's workplans evolve to meet community needs, the goals still reflect the work of their organization well. Furthermore, while work may differ across organizations in terms of implementation, goals of organizations remain consistent with LSTA goals at a high level. Future improvement opportunities for organizations and LSTA were discussed and included:

- Focusing on advocacy for libraries at the state level, beyond marketing, and telling the story of libraries' collective impact. Such an effort would help ensure that libraries are valued during funding discussions. Building advocacy capacity at all levels (local, regional, state) could support this.
- Developing more supports related to access, different from accessibility. This would also help better serve individuals with disabilities.

Just over one-third of focus group participants provided mixed feedback on LSTA goal alignment with their organization's and patrons' needs. In general, these participants said the LSTA goals align pretty well, or in part, with their organization's goals, but that gaps do exist. Examples of gaps included:

- While there was a heavy emphasis on youth services, there was lack of clarity in libraries' roles in the K-12 setting.
- The World's Best Workforce goal did not allow for a lot of adult programming. Improvements would include adult basic education goals and alignment with quality out-of-school time, college, and career initiatives. Libraries should contribute to lifelong learning and develop goals around that.
- It may not be clear what the "world's best workforce" means. This goal could be interpreted in many ways.
- Consider reducing process-related barriers to grant applications to quickly address digital literacy needs of the community.

One participant noted that LSTA goals are general enough to be interpreted in many ways, which allows organizations to fit them to their needs. They also noted that LSTA goals may be more pertinent to headquarters than branches.

Just over one-quarter of focus group participants said the LSTA goals did not align well with their organization's and patrons' needs, or that they could be better aligned. Examples of challenges included:

- Organization or school goals may align with LSTA goals inspirationally, but less so in practice.

- Some do not have the capacity to apply to LSTA grants, given the amount of work involved in the application.
- It can be challenging to identify an LSTA goal that aligns with goals of an organization or its patrons, particularly for schools. The budget requirements in LSTA grants do not always align with what organizations or schools actually need.

World's Best Workforce

Participants discussed the value of professional development opportunities, Libraries Serving Youth Meetups, Summer Meal Program collaborations, Every Child Ready to Read, and Supercharged Storytimes. Participants also discussed barriers to professional development opportunities, the 90-Second Newbery Film Festival, early literacy bookmarks and posters, Every Child Ready to Read, and Summer Meal Program collaborations. General barriers to activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families or caregivers were also noted.

Professional development

Participants said there is high-quality and a good quantity of professional development opportunities for library workers in Minnesota. They also noted that it has been helpful to have professional development provided to library workers, as there is limited capacity for libraries to provide it directly. Remote professional development opportunities have been particularly valuable to libraries located outside of the Twin Cities Metro, as they reduce barriers related to travel expenses and travel time. Some professional development opportunities have been particularly valuable to library staff, such as those focused on serving diverse communities, including large immigrant communities in Minnesota (e.g., Somali, Hmong, Hispanic, Vietnamese).

In terms of barriers to accessing professional development opportunities, participants noted that it can be more difficult for staff in Greater Minnesota and part-time staff to access these opportunities due to travel time and travel expenses. While more virtual opportunities are becoming available, decreasing cost and time to participants, some opportunities limit the number of virtual seats available. When this happens, and the session is not recorded, it closes off the opportunity to a larger group of library staff. Multiple focus group participants remarked on the value of recording professional development opportunities to improve both dissemination and flexibility in viewing. One participant noted that recordings and repeat opportunities are also helpful in training staff when turnover occurs.

One participant noted that, while some professional development opportunities seem relevant, others seem less aligned with their work. This participant suggested asking libraries about their professional development needs prior to identifying and disseminating opportunities. Another participant noted that it is difficult to track when professional development opportunities are being offered, because they receive many emails from SLS.

Schools may face different challenges in accessing professional development opportunities, including applicability of content (current material is more applicable for public libraries) and timing of trainings (not provided before or after school, or recorded). One participant noted that some school districts include more schools than library branches in an entire county, and schools serve a significant number of students for most of the day and much of the year, both of which could be training opportunities for staff and implementation opportunities for students.

Libraries serving youth meetups

These meetups have been helpful for connecting library professionals across the state to share experiences and practices. The meetups have offered opportunities to learn across organizations and have cultivated a rich learning environment. The meetups were noted as particularly helpful during the pandemic, as people have been more disconnected. One participant noted that they have felt more connected during the pandemic due to the success of meetups than they have in over a decade of library service.

90-Second Newbery Film Festival

Participants commonly discussed the 90-Second Newbery Film Festival as challenging to participate in for a variety of reasons, including transportation for festival participants and not having enough copies of Newbery award winners for children to read. One participant said the festival is particularly challenging for smaller libraries to implement, and another participant said they are unaware of anyone that is implementing it.

Summer meal program collaborations

Summer meal program collaborations were discussed as very valuable to communities, particularly during the pandemic. One participant noted that they were able to continue this program during the pandemic because of the partnerships they had developed.

Though some participants discussed the value of Summer Meal Program collaborations, one participant noted that their library did not have the capacity to continue this work during the pandemic.

Other programming

Every Child Ready to Read and Supercharged Storytimes were noted as being very valuable both for patrons and library staff. One participant said certification of library staff for Every Child Ready to Read has been inconsistent, leaving libraries to determine pathways to certification. Certification has been important because it allows libraries to implement train-the-trainer models, in which certified library staff train daycare providers, who then earn continuing education credits for the license.

Early literacy bookmarks and posters were discussed as being less valuable. While one participant said they use materials with their own branding instead, another participant said bookmark requests have been difficult to fill, though Spanish bookmarks would be helpful to have.

In reflecting on activities that improve library services to children, youth, and families or caregivers broadly, one participant noted that they have not implemented any of the opportunities or know of anyone that has. They said that this may be reflective of the opportunities being more valuable for pre-kindergarten or kindergarten students.

One participant noted that, while some of the larger libraries may have the capacity to take advantage of programs related to the World's Best Workforce, smaller libraries that rely on part-time staff do not, though it would be beneficial if they could.

Responding to community needs

Participants commonly discussed the value of Indigenous Representation workshops and collections, supporting immigrant, rural, and second-language communities, and the Ebooks Minnesota collection from Minitex. Participants also discussed the value of Project READY, the All Are Welcome workshops, and accessibility.

Participants also discussed communication barriers related to responding to community needs, and barriers related to staffing, supporting immigrant, rural, and second-language communities, All Are Welcome workshops, and accessing professional development.

Indigenous representation workshops and collections

These workshops and collections were described by participants as amazing, formative, and wonderful. Participants discussed the benefits of promoting the collections through ILL and throughout their own organization's collection, and the opportunity to learn about different tribal nations. Participants appreciated that the materials were selected by American Indian communities and said this work fostered stronger, more trusting relationships for the future. One participant suggested replicating this work with other communities in Minnesota, such as Hmong and Somali.

Supporting immigrant, rural, and second-language communities

Participants commented on the necessary and timely nature of this work, with one noting that, without receiving grant support, staff training in this area likely would not have happened.

Participants shared successes in this area, including translating catalogues into other languages, assisting individuals in studying for citizenship, bridging gaps between immigrant parents and first-generation children, hiring full-time liaisons from specific communities, and offering programming such as American Indian book clubs, entrepreneurship for the Hispanic community, and digital literacy in Spanish.

One participant noted that they have multiple, large immigrant communities with different needs and that it is challenging to address everything. Another participant said they do not have much racial diversity in their communities and therefore do not feel it is appropriate for all of their staff to take advantage of professional development opportunities in this area. Instead, they send one staff person, who trains other staff and acts as a point person on that subject matter.

Ebooks

Ebooks was described by participants as integral and invaluable, particularly during the pandemic when some participants saw significant usage. Library staff discussed promoting it to schools and schools noted the positive impact the collection has had on resources available to schools. One participant suggested expanding the collection. Another participant appreciated Minitex pushing publishers to include diverse books and books with text-to-speech available.

Other programming

One participant noted that candidates for youth librarian positions are citing Project READY as a formative experience in their own development. Another participant said that Project READY works for both public and school libraries by helping them improve the resources they create.

The All Are Welcome workshops were noted as valuable, though one participant said it was difficult to get staff into the workshops because they fill up quickly.

One participant said they did not know about opportunities related to responding to community needs. Other participants said it is challenging to sift through all of the information they receive, particularly when communicated through the SLS newsletter. Instead, participants noted using other resources to find

opportunities, such as Facebook groups. Participants suggested broadening the methods of communication used to share these opportunities, beyond the SLS newsletter.

Related to staffing, participants said it is challenging to ensure their staff are knowledgeable about all library offerings (e.g., MBTBL, ELM, translated resources), particularly when staff work part-time and when there is staff turnover.

One participant noted difficulties in school staff taking advantage of professional development opportunities. They noted that there are not dedicated staff in SLS to support school libraries, or staff who are able to meet before or after school. Instead, schools receive more prescriptive professional development, while public libraries have more flexibility in what is available.

LSTA Grant Making

Participants commonly discussed positive experiences with the grant-making process and the value of grant opportunities. Participants often mentioned the helpfulness of SLS staff in answering questions, providing support, and communicating with applicants. One participant said the SLS newsletter is helpful for sharing information about grant opportunities. Participants noted that grant opportunities allowed them the flexibility to try new ideas, particularly those that may not otherwise receive organizational or local support. Participants also noted that the hot spot grant was a particularly effective grant opportunity because it was targeted and focused, and it allowed flexibility in implementation to ensure hot spots were implemented where they were most needed. One participant discussed appreciation for mini-grants, noting that the application and reporting for this grant type is easy and that they allow libraries to try new ideas or enhance existing programs, where little funding otherwise exists to do so.

Common barriers to grant making included:

- Long grant applications, which require a significant amount of time to complete—a resource smaller libraries do not have. One participant from a larger library noted that capacity to complete grant applications was also a challenge in their organization. Shorter, simpler applications were suggested.
- Lack of staff training and expertise at smaller libraries to complete grant applications, leaving some feeling less able to compete with larger libraries. One participant suggested providing grant writing assistance. Another participant suggested creating LSTA trainings around keys to grant writing success, to help libraries overcome these concerns.
- Smaller libraries not having the capacity to fulfill requirements of large, competitive grants. One participant from a larger library also noted that fulfilling grant requirements within the grant time frame was a challenge in their organization. More flexibility in implementation and longer implementation timeframes were suggested, though participants recognized that there may be other requirements (e.g., federal) that prevent those possibilities.
- Participants from school libraries noted barriers unique to the school setting, including awards being made during the summer, rather than following the school calendar, and grants not approving hourly pay rates for graduate-level teachers involved in school library work.

Promoting barrier-free access

Participants commonly discussed the value of ELM and ILL. The potential value of the school portal was also discussed. Participants also commonly discussed barriers related to ELM, MBTBL, and digital equity and literacy.

eLibrary Minnesota (ELM)

Participants noted the importance and value of the ELM database. One participant said ELM is particularly important for school partners, as school librarian positions are being eliminated, to ensure that schools continue to have access to resources that support students. This participant also noted that not everyone is familiar with ELM, so it would benefit from additional promotion.

Participants said they are unable to access ELM data to know how much the service is being used. While they may receive positive anecdotal information, they are unsure how much value it is providing because they are unsure how often it is being used.

One participant said it is challenging to convince patrons to use ELM because of the lengthy process users need to follow to access it. They felt the service was more appropriate for academic or school libraries, but not the general public. Other participants said there are too many electronic databases to which schools can subscribe and that keeping track of the login information is challenging.

Inter-Library Loans (ILL)

Participants also noted ILL as an important resource that provides significant value to their patrons and partners (e.g., public schools, colleges). One participant observed a lot of ILL usage in the data they have access to, and said ILL was one of the first activities they got running during the pandemic. Most participants that discussed ILL said it is critical to their size library and/or location. They noted that ILL fills gaps for their patrons, that ILL services are fast, and that it was a highly requested service during closure.

Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL)

Participants that discussed MBTBL said it is a service they forget about, often due to low usage, though they recognized the importance and value of the service for those who need it.

School portal

Participants expressed interest in learning more about how to use the school portal to support students and families. One participant hoped the portal was available in languages commonly spoken in their community.

Digital equity and literacy

Participants discussed challenges with programming to ensure all school-age children have public or digital library cards to address digital equity and literacy, due to data privacy concerns. One participant suggested that libraries start providing information literacy to adults in multiple languages to further the goal of barrier-free access.

Future LSTA funding

When discussing future uses for LSTA funding, participants discussed increased communications between libraries, additional technical assistance or support, efforts to connect cultures, and communicating the impact of libraries:

- Participants suggested using LSTA funding to support dissemination of information on programs and practices other libraries are implementing. Suggestions included broad references to increased communication statewide, presenting information as part of a final grant report, and using a format

similar to the 90-Second Newbery Film Festival to communicate what was done, what worked, lessons learned, and how to scale efforts.

- One participant said they would like to see meetings held for those interested in applying for LSTA grants, rather than an open discussion format where competitive information may be shared.
- Another participant said they would like to see additional support in developing and sorting collections for different audiences, rather than relying on numerous databases with different materials.
- One participant said they would like to see Minitex pull together more collections about different cultures so that patrons have increased opportunities to connect with other cultures.
- One participant discussed the importance of hiring more librarians and educating administrators, school boards, staff at the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), and other stakeholders on the importance of libraries, what libraries are capable of, how to implement initiatives in libraries, and the impact libraries can have.

Interviews

MAD conducted two group Interviews with staff from MBTBL and Minitex and focused on barriers to access, increasing awareness, communication and marketing, activities, support from SLS, and future LSTA funding.

Barriers to access

MBTBL

Interviewees said the application to sign up for services is not something that can be easily completed and submitted online using e-signatures. The application is a fillable PDF with moderate accessibility, or is paper-based and is mailed to individuals to complete, which can be a challenge.

Interviewees also said more outreach is needed to users with nonphysical disabilities, such as learning disabilities, as these groups can also make use of services. Interviewees cautioned SLS not to limit availability of current services, such as braille when addressing needs of groups with different disabilities.

Interviewees also recommended increasing staffing of the phone service available for requesting books so that it is staffed during business hours.

Minitex

Interviewees noted the following barriers to accessing Minitex services:

- To request an ILL, users must navigate to a separate website, which requires an additional step in the process and user education.
- Libraries may not have staff with time or expertise to handle ILL requests. Staff may not feel that ILL is an important service.
- Library hours may limit when patrons can pick up their requested books.
- Patrons may not feel that ILLs arrive quickly enough for their needs.
- Patrons may not be aware of ILL.

Increasing awareness

MBTBL

Interviewees suggested building awareness of direct users, the general public, and family, friends, and relatives of individuals by having a sample of braille books and cartridges available in all libraries, with information on how to access additional resources.

Interviewees also suggested:

- Developing public service announcements or running a campaign for MBTBL.
- Targeting students and places where seniors gather (e.g., casinos, senior living centers).
- Maintaining and developing accounts with institutions and organizations that serve individuals that may benefit from MBTBL services to increase access to individuals. For example, accounts with nursing homes and assisted care homes.
- Promoting MBTBL at workshops, seminars, and conferences attended by librarians.

Communication and marketing

Minitex

Interviewees noted that Minitex utilizes partners to amplify services. Additionally, Minitex works in partnership with education (e.g., regional service cooperatives that serve K-12 schools, colleges) to amplify services.

Minitex staff typically conduct site visits around the state to talk with staff and provide training and technical assistance. Education is also provided through conferences and workshops.

Targeted marketing has been provided to Education Minnesota about Ebooks, including advertisements in new places to reach new audiences. Some of Minitex's meetings were moved to an online setting, which had previously been held in person. Interviewees noted they were able reach more people who previously could not attend due to distance and staffing limitations.

Finally, the new Minitex website and helpdesk software helps communicate services to libraries.

Activities

MBTBL

Interviewees discussed the following efforts related to staff training in digital technology, accessibility, early literacy, and customer service:

- A new system allows up to 24 books to be loaded on a cartridge, instead of just one. This saves staff time and is helpful for users.
- Library leadership has cultivated respectful empathy among staff. For example, obtaining more information online is one of many options for patrons, but it is not the first suggestion staff provide.
- The phone tree provides the library with an idea of why patrons are calling, which helps inform staffing levels and training needs.

Minitex

Interviewees discussed the following efforts related to ensuring equity in distribution of resources and services:

- Minitex has reached out to more tribal and school libraries about resource sharing services but has not been particularly successful. Schools often lack school librarians. If schools have media center assistants, those roles are spread thin across many duties and do not have adequate time.
- Minitex has engaged in intentional work to ensure that Ebooks Minnesota reflects readers in Minnesota. A diversity audit was conducted and additional materials were purchased to represent racial, gender, and sexual orientation and gender identity diversity, as well as additional Spanish-language content.
- ELM instruction has focused on one-on-one consultations to ensure Minitex resources are available on a local level.
- Ebooks Minnesota switched to a new platform utilized by more schools, giving students and teachers easier access to those resources. Additionally, resources for kindergarten through grade 3 were added.
- Minitex is able to rely on a delivery network, or on shipping books to locations outside of the delivery network. The only barrier to ILL is having library staff available to receive and request books; there are no physical barriers to ILL.

Support from SLS

MBTBL

In addition to increased funding, interviewees suggested increasing the number of books available through narration that are written by Minnesota authors or about Minnesota. Additionally, interviewees suggested identifying safe ways for individuals with disabilities to physically visit libraries during the pandemic. As one interviewee said, “For so long, libraries have been the government organization people with disabilities have interacted with the most, but it’s not somewhere they can go—you can have books delivered electronically or mailed, but there is something to say about having a place to go where the materials come from, having a connection to staff and narrators, and a place where you can browse that’s not always searching with a keyboard online or a human over the phone.”

Interviewees also suggested having braille books available for users to browse and increasing understanding among regional libraries of the availability of MBTBL services and community need.

Minitex

Interviewees noted that SLS is doing a good job of having conversations with partners and increasing awareness. Interviewees also felt that SLS has been thoughtful about distributing funds differently, particularly to tribal colleges and community libraries, and helpful with the grant application process and in providing technical assistance around how to write a good application.

Interviewees said controlled digital lending related to e-books will be something to pay attention to, including open education resources and open access resources. These things could impact Minitex services but could be supported by LSTA funds and/or SLS.

Regarding Five-Year Plan activities, interviewees suggested:

- Sending out more timely report completion requests
- Fewer short deadlines and last-minute requests
- Ensuring all paperwork requested is the right paperwork to be filled out
- Assisting in communications to the K-12 community, given that SLS is located within MDE (or, assisting with communications and outreach more generally)

Interviewees said that, in the future, there will be a need for education and professional development for library staff, particularly if staff do not have a library background (e.g., SLS involvement in identifying core training for library staff statewide).

Future LSTA funding

MBTBL

Interviewees suggested using future LSTA funding to:

- Close the gap between the volume of resources available to patrons without disabilities and the volume of resources available to patrons with disabilities (e.g., bring the number of braille titles available closer to the number of print titles available).
- Increase awareness of MBTBL among regional libraries and among those who are eligible but may not yet be taking advantage of services.
- Make an accessible platform (or improve accessibility of existing platforms) for academic journal articles.
- Make academic journal articles accessible at the same level provided to sighted readers (e.g., references and footnotes work properly in the document).
- Increase accessibility efforts within children's literature.

It should be noted, however, that some of these suggestions are not activities over which MBTBL has total control. MBTBL can advocate for those suggestions.

Minitex

In addition to more funding, interviewees suggested using LSTA funding to ensure that there is a librarian in every school and in every library, and to support statewide broadband access.

Survey questions

Survey respondents were asked three open-ended questions:

- Why do these needs stand out? (Following: Looking ahead to 2022, what are your community's greatest needs? Choose up to three.)
- What other support would you like to see from SLS in the future?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with SLS about LSTA-funded activities you have experienced within the evaluation period?

Why do these needs stand out?

One hundred and nine respondents provided an answer to this question. Nearly half of those that responded discussed why **access to broadband and technology** stands out as a community need. Nearly half of these respondents discussed the intersection of poverty, rural geography, and access to broadband or technology. These respondents noted that many rural communities do not have access to broadband services or cannot afford it. Similarly, lower-income communities, such as seniors, students, working class, and immigrants, are not always able to afford the technology required to access the internet or online information. This makes available technology and broadband in libraries crucial, as it may be the only place community members can access it.

Providing for these needs in libraries can help decrease the “digital divide” between populations, as information shifts to an increasingly online environment.

Several respondents generally mentioned a lack of access to broadband and technology in their communities as a common problem, which has been exacerbated by the pandemic. These respondents noted that community members rely on libraries for broadband and technology to gain access to education, employment, and social services assistance.

Several respondents discussed the importance of access to broadband and technology for school-age children. These respondents noted that a lack of access has contributed to widening learning gaps, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic as schools transition to online learning. Respondents reported that this has impacted early literacy and school readiness efforts. One respondent noted that lack of access also impacts parents of school-age children, who are not able to easily interact with different components of student life, which are increasingly moving online (e.g., school communications, registering for activities, accessing report cards).

A few respondents noted that large or growing immigrant communities in Greater Minnesota often do not have access to broadband or technology. These communities have been turning to library staff more frequently for assistance with immigration questions.

A few respondents discussed workforce issues related to access to broadband and technology, including ensuring staff are up to date on continuously changing technology.

Just over one-quarter of those that responded to the question discussed why **media literacy, including combating misinformation** stands out as a community need. Just over two-thirds of these respondents noted general struggles with media literacy and misinformation in their community, often attributing it to the public being unable to evaluate the quality of information they are consuming, utilizing and trusting unreliable sources and social media, and consuming information in echo chambers. A few respondents mentioned misinformation challenges related to the pandemic (e.g., masking, vaccines) and racism in their communities. A few respondents noted that isolated and aging community members, some of whom are in rural locations and/or have lower incomes, are often targeted with misinformation that they struggle to effectively evaluate. Another respondent noted that students are also at risk for being unprepared to evaluate information appropriately with the decline in employment of school librarians. A few respondents highlighted the need for training, resources, and programming on media literacy and misinformation.

Nearly one-quarter of those that responded to the question discussed why **racial equity** stands out as a community need. Nearly half of these respondents discussed racial equity efforts as a general need of their patrons and community for a variety of reasons, including serving BIPOC patrons, growing BIPOC and immigrant communities, and reducing racial disparities. These respondents noted the importance of library staff representation and of representation within collections and programming offered. A few respondents noted that the pandemic has exacerbated underlying racism in their communities, with some groups protesting for racial equity and justice, as well as diverse books. A few respondents said there is a need for programming and education around racial equity to help combat racism in their communities. One respondent suggested pooling resources to create a statewide e-books system that includes diverse collections. One respondent noted that their organization has committed to including racial equity in organization-level plans and staff-level plans, while another respondent said their strategic planning efforts identified racial equity as a priority.

Several of those that responded to the question discussed why **access to information (physical and digital resources)** stands out as a community need. Just over half discussed access to information as generally important to their communities. One respondent noted that access to information promotes community improvement and equity. Challenges included economic impacts on patrons' ability to access information and shoestring library budgets. One respondent noted that they were working to expand digital access to resources, and another noted that access to information is a pillar of the library system. A few respondents also discussed community engagement. One respondent mentioned working to engage seniors, children, and teens to promote lifelong learning. Another respondent mentioned engaging young families that are looking for resources and support. One respondent expressed concern that public libraries are unable to adequately support the needs of high school students.

In answering this question, respondents also discussed other important issues, including:

- Several respondents discussed **challenges with under-resourcing of school libraries**, including impacts on student performance and widening the learning gap. Respondents noted that school libraries are often staffed by individuals without library training, that schools may lack library media service programs altogether, that school library services and staffing are being cut despite need, and that limited funding is limiting school collection development.
- Several respondents discussed the importance of **developing the library workforce**, including hiring staff that are representative of community members, hiring staff that have library services training (or providing that training to existing staff), ensuring staff are able to meet a variety of community needs, and ensuring staff are up to date on trends and technology.
- A few respondents said **hot spots** are in great demand in their communities.
- A few respondents discussed the **importance of Ebooks Minnesota** for seniors (to access materials in their own homes), schools (who have limited funding to curate their own collections), and to better serve Minnesotans generally.
- A few respondents discussed **needs of immigrant communities**. One respondent noted that immigrant communities are heavy users of libraries. Other respondents discussed an increase in English language learners in their communities, with requests for programming in this area.
- A few respondents discussed **challenges providing library services to young children**, including drops in children's book circulation during the pandemic, and young children not having access to public library resources. One respondent suggested increasing access through single sign-on services (e.g., Classlink, Clever).

What other support would you like to see from SLS in the future?

Seventy respondents provided an answer to this question. Just over one-quarter suggested **additional collaboration or partnership**. Nearly half of these respondents suggested collaboration and partnership in the school setting, including continued collaboration between school and public libraries, more collaboration between library educators statewide, and collaboration between legacy programs, libraries, and schools. Respondents also suggested more collaboration between SLS and school library media specialists to identify support and communication needs. Half of these respondents suggested collaboration and partnership with rural, regional, and local libraries to broaden resources available to these libraries, to better meet the needs of these libraries (e.g., professional development, programming and services, communication), and to identify where these libraries fit into LSTA goals.

Nearly one-quarter suggested **programming support**, including programming to address media literacy and technology, more coordinated statewide programming across libraries in Minnesota, programming to support all ages and cultures, programming for English language learners, additional traveling exhibits or mobile programming, and development of programming that can be delivered at the local level. One respondent suggested better communication about available programming, while another respondent suggested better training for library staff to deliver programming.

Several respondents suggested providing **additional professional development opportunities** for staff, including racial equity training, training on implementation of equity initiatives in libraries, online library meetups, new staff training, and reviving the “Library Skills 101” trainings. One respondent noted it is important to provide professional development for library staff at all educational levels. Another respondent noted the importance of providing virtual, asynchronous professional development opportunities.

Several respondents suggested **additional SLS communications**, including communication about available programming and resources, grants, equity, and professional development opportunities. A few respondents noted the importance of communicating directly with all library staff, as communications from SLS are not always adequately shared below library leadership. One respondent suggested a statewide marketing campaign about public libraries.

Several respondents discussed **grant making**. A few of these respondents suggested improvements to grant-making processes, including easier applications and assistance with grant writing. A few respondents suggested additional grant assistance for hot spots in areas without broadband access. One respondent said they appreciated the mini-grant opportunities.

Several respondents recommended **continuing support for and expanding e-books collections (or other online collections)** to share content more widely, including content located on other platforms (e.g., Overdrive). Respondents described these collections as invaluable, particularly for schools. One respondent suggested legislation to regulate the prices of e-books because libraries struggle to obtain reasonable pricing from publishers.

A few respondents discussed **challenges with adequate staffing levels to support library services**. These respondents suggested SLS communications to library leadership about the importance of adequate staffing levels and SLS-led advocacy at the state level to inform standards for staffing, particularly in schools.

A few respondents said **they did not need additional support from SLS**. These respondents expressed **appreciation for SLS services and staff**.

Is there anything else you would like to share with SLS about LSTA-funded activities you have experienced within the evaluation period?

Twenty-nine respondents provided an answer to this question. Nearly one-quarter said **they did not have anything else to share**.

Just over one-quarter discussed **SLS staff**. Most respondents praised SLS staff as being supportive, knowledgeable, helpful, responsive, and accommodating. One respondent said SLS is disorganized, which impacts rural libraries. Another respondent said SLS should focus efforts on items only they can accomplish, rather than duplicating work that can be done by others.

March 29, 2022

Just over one-quarter discussed **grant making**. Half of these respondents expressed gratitude for receiving SLS funding, noting that it has benefited students and librarians through program improvements and program development. The other half of these respondents discussed challenges with SLS grants, including lack of sufficient communication about opportunities, the complexity of the application process, lack of internal capacity to apply, one-time funding limiting what is possible to accomplish, awards being too small, and lack of communication during and after the application process.