



North Dakota State Library  
Library Services & Technology Act, 2018-2022

# EVALUATION REPORT

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**Project Commissioned by the North Dakota State Library**  
A Division of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction  
February 2022

NORTH  
DAKOTA  
STATE  
LIBRARY



*North Dakota  
State Library*

## Library Services & Technology Act, 2018-2022 Evaluation Report

**Project Commissioned By:**

North Dakota State Library

A Division of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction

Mary Soucie, State Librarian

**Evaluation Conducted and Report Prepared By:**

Jason Matthews, JM Strategies LLC



STRATEGIES

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## PART 1: EVALUATION SUMMARY

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The Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) administers a grants-to-states program through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) that provides funding to the North Dakota State Library (NDSL), which is designated as the State Library Administrative Agency for North Dakota. NDSL is a division of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction and provides centralized library services for the state.

NDSL applied LSTA monies to the following eight programs, which all fall within the scope of IMLS' three focal areas of Lifelong Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Capacity...

- Online Library Resources (Database)
- Statewide Cataloging
- Talking Books
- InterLibrary Loan (ILL)
- Digitization
- Collection (Including E-Books)
- Continuing Education
- Summer Reading (CSLP)

### EVALUATION PURPOSE & RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

NDSL commissioned the evaluation project and hired Jason Matthews of JM Strategies LLC to conduct the evaluation. Matthews evaluated the previous five-year plan and is very familiar with both NDSL and the state's library community. NDSL and JM Strategies developed a research approach that took place from September through December 2021, collecting data from librarians through...

- **Online Benchmark Survey:** A survey was developed and distributed in September to all librarians across North Dakota. One-hundred and twenty-six (126) librarians participated in the survey. The data collected was analyzed for themes and used to provide a foundation for four focus group sessions.
- **Focus Group Sessions: Four focus group sessions were conducted.** The first focus group was an in-person session open to all librarians during the North Dakota Library Association (NDLA) annual conference on October 7, 2021. Three other sessions were held in November via Zoom for public librarians, school librarians, and librarians working in academic, special, and tribal libraries.

Results from each research method were reviewed, tabulated and organized by JM Strategies in consultation with North Dakota State Librarian Mary Soucie.

### KEY FINDINGS

Based on the results of the evaluation process, NDSL has achieved its goals and objectives for 18 activities, partially achieved goals and objectives for four activities, and did not achieve

goals and objectives for two activities. A summary of the key findings for each goal and its subsequent activities are listed below...

**Goal 1: The North Dakota State Library enhances access to information by providing libraries, citizens, government agencies, and other key stakeholders with access to materials, electronic resources, and professional staff to meet the informational needs of all North Dakotans.**

**Achieved:**

- 1.1 Maintain and expand statewide databases and promote their availability to libraries and citizens across the state.
- 1.2 Provide and expand access to talking books for the visually impaired and physically disabled.
- 1.5 Provide and further facilitate statewide interlibrary loan.
- 1.6 Maintain a diverse collection that meets the needs of the served and unserved communities across the state.
- 1.7 Offer professional reference services to library staff, state and local governments, and all North Dakotans.
- 1.8 Provide statewide cataloging services.
- 1.9 Continue existing partnerships and develop new partnerships that increase awareness to the broadest array of information resources.

**Partially Achieved:**

- 1.3 Offer education on digitization and guidance on digitization standards.
- 1.4 Facilitate discussions regarding the future of digitization and new technologies.

**Not Achieved:** None

**Goal 2: The North Dakota State Library provides services and resources towards advancing and improving the institutional capacity of the state's library community to meet the demands of the public and support the continued professional development and training of the state's library workforce.**

**Achieved:**

- 2.1 Provide continued library development programming and resources to assist libraries in meeting the needs of their patrons and communities.
- 2.2 Provide ongoing continuing education and professional development opportunities to librarians and library staff across North Dakota through workshops, seminars, and specialized trainings.
- 2.3 Provide MLS grants.
- 2.4 Offer IT support to libraries to ensure North Dakota libraries are equipped to meet the informational, educational, and service needs of their patrons.

- 2.5 Deliver marketing support to libraries through specialized materials, trainings, and related resources that assist them in their outreach to patrons and other key stakeholder groups.
- 2.6 Coordinate with librarians the promotion and management of the annual statewide summer reading program to promote literacy and raise library awareness.

**Partially Achieved:** None

**Not Achieved:** None

**Goal 3: The North Dakota State Library strives to enrich the lives of North Dakotans by offering services and programs that support and promote continued lifelong learning.**

**Achieved:**

- 3.1 Conduct outreach activities to the public through collaboration with all types of libraries, workshops, events, programs, and marketing of available services and resources.
- 3.2 Actively promote and provide library and information materials to North Dakota libraries, state agencies, and the general public.
- 3.3 Provide current and relevant databases, and promote their availability via the North Dakota State Library newsletter, website, and social media.
- 3.4 Develop, promote and facilitate resource sharing among all North Dakota libraries.

**Partially Achieved:**

- 3.5 Develop collaborative and strategic partnerships with relevant state agencies, schools, and community-based organizations in order to maximize service potential and extend outreach to North Dakotans.
- 3.6 Through collaborative partnerships with public and/or private partners, develop relationships with North Dakota's tribal communities and libraries.

**Not Achieved:** None

**Goal 4: The North Dakota State Library provides all North Dakotans with access to relevant library services, resources, and information that effectively addresses personal and professional needs of individuals and the civic, cultural, and economic needs of our communities.**

**Achieved:**

- 4.2 Continue to provide and promote the annual summer reading program to promote literacy, engage children and young people, and connect young families with the library community.

**Partially Achieved:** None

**Not Achieved:**

- 4.1 Explore and facilitate a statewide financial literacy program, such as ALA's 'Money Smart Week.'
- 4.3 Explore and enhance partnerships with state and local governments and other groups that advance libraries' ability to aid in statewide and community-specific workforce development.

**CONCLUSION**

This evaluation is based on quantitative research, qualitative research, and self-evaluation. Since the last five-year plan, NDSL has been reorganized to better meet the needs of the state's library community.

The six goals, objectives, and activities where NDSL only partially met and fell short were largely attributed to a combination of four factors: (1) the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, (2) staffing, (3) failure to implement recommendations, and (4) nothing resulting from discussions and outreach. NDSL is aware of these issues and is already focused on readjusting approaches or adopting more realistic targets.

On balance, NDSL met 18 out of 24 goals and objectives – a 75 percent success rate – which, by any standard can be fairly deemed as excellent.



## PART 2: PROCESS BACKGROUND

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### NORTH DAKOTA STATE LIBRARY, IMLS, AND LSTA

The Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) is the primary source of federal support for the nation's libraries and museums. IMLS administers the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), which provides grants-to-states to develop and deliver centralized statewide library services.



The North Dakota State Library (NDSL) is a division of the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction (DPI). It is designated as the State Library Administrative Agency for North Dakota with the mission to provide pathways to information and innovation for North Dakota's libraries, state government, and residents.

NDSL provides the state's library community with leadership, directional, and developmental assistance. North Dakota's libraries depend on NDSL for assistance in processing interlibrary loans, cataloging, reference services, on-site training, grants, and promotional support. NDSL has developed a close partnership with North Dakota's libraries and educators by connecting them to information and providing them with the critical tools they need to serve their patrons.



State government agencies rely on NDSL for a range of vital services, chief among them: Providing research assistance, training, cataloging services of which NDSL currently catalogs for 11 state agencies, and administering the State Document Depository Program, which preserves and distributes North Dakota state agency publications.

NDSL ensures the availability of information, resources, and materials to residents through professional research services, access to Online Library Resources, interlibrary loan, and talking books for the visually impaired. NDSL also provides a collection for the public to check out books and materials.

LSTA funds enable NDSL to provide many of these critical services. Specifically, NDSL applies LSTA dollars to the following eight programs...

- Online Library Resources (Database)
- Statewide Cataloging
- Talking Books
- InterLibrary Loan (ILL)
- Digitization
- Collection (Including E-Books)
- Continuing Education
- Summer Reading (CSLP)



Each of these programs fall within the scope of IMLS' three focal areas of Lifelong Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Capacity. NDSL's four goals within its current five-year LSTA plan are anchored in these focal areas and touch on at least one of the following seven LSTA priorities...

- **LSTA Priority 1:** Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills.
- **LSTA Priority 2:** Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve coordination among and between libraries and entities for the purposes of improving the quality of an access to library and information services.
- **LSTA Priority 3:** (A) Provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library information services, and (B) enhance efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services.
- **LSTA Priority 4:** Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.
- **LSTA Priority 5:** Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills.
- **LSTA Priority 6:** Target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually by the federal government) applicable to a family of the size involved.
- **LSTA Priority 7:** Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

## NDSL'S CURRENT LSTA GOALS, PROGRAMS, AND ACTIONS

### *Goal 1: Information Access*

The North Dakota State Library enhances access to information by providing libraries, citizens, government agencies, and other key stakeholders with access to materials, electronic resources, and professional staff to meet the informational needs of all North Dakotans.

**LSTA Priorities:** 1, 2, 5, 6, 7

**NDSL Activities:**

- 1.1 Maintain and expand statewide databases and promote their availability to libraries and citizens across the state.
- 1.2 Provide and expand access to talking books for the visually impaired and physically disabled.

- 1.3 Offer education on digitization and guidance on digitization standards.
- 1.4 Facilitate discussions regarding the future of digitization and new technologies.
- 1.5 Provide and further facilitate statewide interlibrary loan.
- 1.6 Maintain a diverse collection that meets the needs of the served and unserved communities across the state.
- 1.7 Offer professional reference services to library staff, state and local governments, and all North Dakotans.
- 1.8 Provide statewide cataloging services.
- 1.9 Continue existing partnerships and develop new partnerships that increase awareness to the broadest array of information resources.

### *Goal 2: Institutional Capacity and Support*

The North Dakota State Library provides services and resources towards advancing and improving the institutional capacity of the state's library community to meet the demands of the public and support the continued professional development and training of the state's library workforce.

**LSTA Priority: 3**

**NDSL Activities:**

- 2.1 Provide continued library development programming and resources to assist libraries in meeting the needs of their patrons and communities.
- 2.2 Provide ongoing continuing education and professional development opportunities to librarians and library staff across North Dakota through workshops, seminars, and specialized trainings.
- 2.3 Provide MLS grants.
- 2.4 Offer IT support to libraries to ensure North Dakota libraries are equipped to meet the informational, educational, and service needs of their patrons.
- 2.5 Deliver marketing support to libraries through specialized materials, trainings, and related resources that assist them in their outreach to patrons and other key stakeholder groups.
- 2.6 Coordinate with librarians the promotion and management of the annual statewide summer reading program to promote literacy and raise library awareness.

### *Goal 3: Lifelong Learning*

The North Dakota State Library strives to enrich the lives of North Dakotans by offering services and programs that support and promote continued lifelong learning.

**LSTA Priorities: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7**

### **NDSL Activities:**

- 3.1 Conduct outreach activities to the public through collaboration with all types of libraries, workshops, events, programs, and marketing of available services and resources.
- 3.2 Actively promote and provide library and information materials to North Dakota libraries, state agencies, and the general public.
- 3.3 Provide current and relevant databases, and promote their availability via the North Dakota State Library newsletter, website, and social media.
- 3.4 Develop, promote and facilitate resource sharing among all North Dakota libraries.
- 3.5 Develop collaborative and strategic partnerships with relevant state agencies, schools, and community-based organizations in order to maximize service potential and extend outreach to North Dakotans.
- 3.6 Through collaborative partnerships with public and/or private partners, develop relationships with North Dakota's tribal communities and libraries.

### **Goal 4: Human Services**

The North Dakota State Library provides all North Dakotans with access to relevant library services, resources, and information that effectively addresses personal and professional needs of individuals and the civic, cultural, and economic needs of our communities.

**LSTA Priorities:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7

### **NDSL Activities:**

- 4.1 Explore and facilitate a statewide financial literacy program, such as ALA's 'Money Smart Week.'
- 4.2 Continue to provide and promote the annual summer reading program to promote literacy, engage children and young people, and connect young families with the library community.
- 4.3 Explore and enhance partnerships with state and local governments and other groups that advance libraries' ability to aid in statewide and community-specific workforce development.

### **Evaluation Purpose & Research Methodology**

In accordance with IMLS requirements, the purpose of this evaluation is to verify whether the activities completed by NDSL in these eight (8) programs met NDSL's five-year LSTA goals and were in compliance with IMLS' focal areas and LSTA priorities. This evaluation was commissioned by North Dakota State Librarian Mary Soucie and conducted by independent consultant Jason Matthews of JM Strategies.

NDSL and JM Strategies developed a research approach for this evaluation process that took place from September through December 2021. The research process collected data from librarians across North Dakota through a benchmark survey and four (4) focus group sessions.

## PART 3: EVALUATION REPORT

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### I. QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS

NDSL and the Consultant collaboratively developed a benchmark online survey for all North Dakota librarians. NDSL emailed the survey on September 14, 2021. Responses were accepted through September 27. One-hundred and twenty-six (126) librarians participated in the survey. The data collected was analyzed for themes and used to provide a foundation for four focus group sessions.

Seventy-two public librarians, 43 school librarians, 8 academic librarians, and one librarian representing special libraries participated in the benchmark survey. Of these 126 survey respondents, 27 percent identified as having five or fewer years of experience in the library profession, 27 percent indicated 11 to 19 years of experience, 24 percent had between six and ten years' experience, and the remaining 23 percent had 20 or more years of experience.

Participants were asked to identify levels of satisfaction with NDSL's eight LSTA-funded programs, select the three most important programs to their library, rank degrees needed changes to the programs, and provide insights into NDSL training opportunities.

#### *Level of Satisfaction with LSTA-funded programs provided by NDSL*

Respondents expressed the highest levels of satisfaction for Interlibrary Loan (ILL), Online Library Resources (Database), Collection (including e-books), and Statewide Cataloging. Respondents stated they were 'very satisfied' with these four programs. The rest were 'generally satisfied' with Continuing Education, Summer Reading (CSLP), Talking Books, and Digitization.

Expressions of dissatisfaction were few but must be noted. Five participants expressed general dissatisfaction with Continuing Education; one individual indicated he/she is 'very dissatisfied.' Four were 'generally dissatisfied' with Summer Reading. Two were generally dissatisfied with Collection (including e-books) and there was one generally dissatisfied vote for Online Library Resources, Talking Books, and InterLibrary Loan. In terms of expressions of being 'very dissatisfied,' there was one vote each for InterLibrary Loan, Digitization, and Continuing Education.

It must be noted that large pluralities identified as being 'neutral' or having the program be 'not applicable' on Talking Books, Digitization, Statewide Cataloging, Summer Reading, Continuing Education, and Collection.

Appreciative comments were shared for NDSL's outreach efforts and expressions of satisfaction among patrons on specific programs. Calls for improvement were made for upgrading Talking Books, a greater variety of training and Continuing Education programs.

#### *Top Three Most Important LSTA Programs*

Respondents were asked to select the top three most important LSTA-funded programs to your library. The responses were as follows...

1) InterLibrary Loan (ILL)	98
2) Online Library Resources (OLR)	96
3) Collection (Including E-Books)	48
4) Summer Reading (SCLP)	43
5) Continuing Education	38
6) Statewide Cataloging	26
7) Digitization	6
8) Talking Books	5

### *Degree of Change Needed in Each LSTA Program*

When it comes to what degree of changes need to be made to current LSTA programs, pluralities – and, in many cases, majorities – of respondents largely stated ‘no change is needed.’ ‘Very low change’ was most frequently cited after ‘no change is needed.’ When asked to share comments and suggestions, survey respondents cited a desire for workshops and trainings on digitization, simplification of online databases, and more marketing materials to help publicize available resources and programs.

### *Thoughts on NDSL Trainings and Continuing Education*

Sixty-one percent of survey participants believe the number of trainings offered by NDSL to be ‘just right.’ In contrast, 21 percent believe not enough trainings are offered.

The methods of providing trainings were greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Forty-six percent indicated they participated in a webinar training while 33 percent stated they have not attended any NDSL trainings. The full responses are as follows...

▪ Webinar	58
▪ I have not attended any NDSL trainings	41
▪ Summer Summit	39
▪ Summer Reading Workshop	37
▪ R&D	26
▪ New Director Orientation	20
▪ Research Methodologies	12

While 34 percent stated that no change is needed for Continuing Education, the remaining 66 percent expressed the desire for some degree of change. Thirty-five percent selected either low or very low change is needed. In contrast, 23 percent want moderate changes made and eight percent want high or very high changes implemented. These specific findings were followed up on during the focus group sessions.

## **II. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The survey data was analyzed for common themes and areas in need of further clarification. The information was used as a foundation to develop questions for the four (4) focus group sessions.

The first focus group was an in-person session open to all librarians during the North Dakota Library Association (NDLA) annual conference on October 7, 2021. Three other sessions were held via Zoom. School librarians were interviewed in a session on November 10, 2021.

Separate sessions for public librarians and academic, special, and tribal librarians were held on November 22, 2021.

While the focus groups slightly varied from each other based on the participants, six areas were examined in the process that provided critical insights on the effectiveness of the current five-year LSTA plan. These areas are: digitization, statewide cataloging, Talking Books, reference services, continuing education and professional development, and partnerships with state agencies.

### *Digitization*

The usage and importance of digitization varies from library to library. College and university librarians indicated a preference for NDSL to serve as a conduit for potential projects for both academic and public libraries. Public librarians in both the NDLA and the public librarians focus group session stated that more information about digitization would be helpful. NDSL acknowledges that digitization is certainly not the most requested of LSTA-funded programs. But as more and more records become digital, the demand will increase and NDSL is positioned to assist all libraries in offering all necessary technical and consulting services.

### *Statewide Cataloging*

Statewide cataloging use is limited. But for those who use it, the service is widely praised and well received. Some librarians described NDSL's statewide cataloging as "easy to use." One small town librarian called it "essential" for her library.

### *Talking Books*

Usage of Talking Books varies depending on a library's patrons, who then go directly through NDSL for reading materials. However, all public libraries are expected to promote the service and librarians recommended updated marketing materials and downloadable fliers and documents to help with the promotion of the program.

### *Reference Services for Patrons*

School librarians were effusive in their praise for NDSL's reference services. One said it is "an amazing resource... everything is there." Mango was cited as a resource that works well for high school students. Some school librarians recommend organizing reference services by elementary, middle school, and high school. Public librarians also praised NDSL's reference resources. "It's a wonderful augmentation of my library's services," noted one.

### *Continuing Education & Professional Development*

The consensus from the focus group sessions is clear. Online and virtual professional development and continuing education sessions are here to stay. Convenience was cited by almost all – but most notably from small town public librarians – as a benefit derived from virtual and online sessions. Almost all, however, acknowledged that in comparison to in-person trainings, online and virtual sessions do not provide network opportunities. Still, many do prefer face-to-face trainings and majorities in all focus groups see the importance of providing a hybrid training model that incorporates both delivery methods. There is a want for all webinars to be recorded and available for download and viewing at later times.

Participants were grateful NDSL continued offering trainings online during the pandemic. Some praised NDSL for adjusting their approach to the new realities. But reviews were mixed when it came to the quality and types of training offered. Some liked the variety of webinars while others thought they were lacking. One public library director would like to see NDSL poll librarians on what they would like to have offered. The NDLA conference focus group session expressed interest in hands-on management training. The public librarians' focus group built off of this suggestion by recommending mid-level management training and a mentoring program, which enjoyed vocal support from the small town public librarians participating in the session. Budgeting and collection development were also mentioned as possible training topics.

Librarians participating in the session for Academic, Special, and Tribal (AST) Libraries expressed the view that NDSL should dedicate at least one session per library classification (public, school, AST) to highlight what NDSL services and collections are available – a “NDSL 101” program. School librarians recommended NDSL provide sessions on how to apply technology to teaching and on technical assistance. Other suggested continuing education and professional development topics included safe zone training, EDI, lifelong learning, workplace communications, wellness training, library trustee training, and databases.

One public librarian shared the idea that NDSL offer different training and development tracks based on library types and sizes (i.e.: rural and urban, staff size, etc.). This suggestion was endorsed by other session participants.

If there was one offering cited for criticism it was the summer reading workshop. Public librarians in the NDLA conference focus group stated they did not see the workshop as having much applicability to their respective summer reading programs. For some, concrete examples of specific programs would be welcomed.

### *Partnerships with State Agencies*

The five-year plan established goals related to fostering partnerships between North Dakota's library community and key state agencies. Responses from the focus groups clearly established that the goal was partially met. The following state agencies were cited as of interest and/or importance to specific librarian groups:

- **Public Librarians:** Job Service North Dakota, Social Services, Information Technology, State Department of Agriculture.
- **School Librarians:** North Dakota Historical Society, Parks and Recreation, North Dakota Heritage Center (State Museum), North Dakota University System, and the Bank of North Dakota (state-owned bank that provides many college loans and scholarships).
- **AST Librarians:** State Historical Society, North Dakota University System.

A desire was expressed for NDSL to engage on a programmatic basis with some agencies, most notably the state historical society, parks and recreation, state museum, etc. One of the challenges is some of the needs for specific departments come up on an immediate, rather than long-term, basis. Collaborative and programmatic approaches take time. It is also a two-



way street. Interest and outreach by NDSL is not always accepted and reciprocated by state agencies.

### *Needed Assistance that NDSL Does Not Currently Provide*

The public librarian, school librarian, and AST librarian focus groups asked participants to identify areas of assistance that are not presently provided by NDSL. All public librarians indicated that they have contacted NDSL for assistance in the past, some frequently. For this group, more information on statewide cataloging for interlibrary loans and guidance on library staffing and personnel assistance issues were cited as areas that would be beneficial. School librarians stated that taking the time to reach out to NDSL is a challenge. This is due to the nature of working in a school setting. Some have contacted NDSL in the past but most of the interaction for this group has been through webinars, trainings, and NDSL's newsletters and emails. For their part, ASL librarians shared a number of observations, many of them born out of the fact that most, as college and university libraries, do not regularly interact with NDSL. To its credit, NDSL is working on changing this as it has hired an AST coordinator to work with this library group. AST librarians shared the following observations...

- NDSL needs to continue working on raising its profile within this library group.
- The current NDSL website needs to be updated.
- NDSL should consider providing assistance with academic library collections and, if possible, provide direction on available grants and programs.
- Develop universal access for students to check out NDSL materials.
- Integrate NDSL's collection with collections within the North Dakota University System's libraries.
- Create marketing templates and creative commons for academic libraries as many of these libraries do not have marketing directors or personnel.

While all ideas have merit, NDSL's challenges in possibly addressing these recommendations is two-fold. The first is obviously budgetary. The second ties in directly with the first – bandwidth. Securing the resources and having the staff to provide such services and resources are matters that are largely out of NDSL's hands. With that stated, the ideas do provide a framework for discussions by NDSL's LSTA planning team as it develops its new five-year plan.

## III. EVALUATION ASSESSMENT

### *Goal 1: Information Access*

The North Dakota State Library enhances access to information by providing libraries, citizens, government agencies, and other key stakeholders with access to materials, electronic resources, and professional staff to meet the informational needs of all North Dakotans.

**LSTA Priorities:** 1, 2, 5, 6, 7

**Intents:**

- Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
- Improve users' ability to discover information resources

## NDSL Activities:

- 1.1 **Maintain and expand statewide databases and promote their availability to libraries and citizens across the state.**
  - **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL promoted databases through its newsletters ('The Flickertale' and 'Connections'), webinars, social media, and promotional materials (postcards, fliers, and bookmarks).
- 1.2 **Provide and expand access to talking books for the visually impaired and physically disabled.**
  - **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL provided access to Talking Books and promoted it through consistent outreach opportunities by NDSL.
- 1.3 **Offer education on digitization and guidance on digitization standards.**
  - **Assessment:** Partially achieved. Education on digitization was provided by NDSL at all professional development events. While information was shared, standards for digitization have yet to be developed. The COVID-19 pandemic and staffing changes contributed in part to the failure to develop digitization standards.
- 1.4 **Facilitate discussions regarding the future of digitization and new technologies.**
  - **Assessment:** Partially achieved. NDSL convened statewide facilitated conversations on the future of digitization. However, recommendations have not yet been implemented.
- 1.5 **Provide and further facilitate statewide interlibrary loan.**
  - **Assessment:** Achieved. We consistently facilitate interlibrary loan on behalf of libraries, state agencies, and residents.
- 1.6 **Maintain a diverse collection that meets the needs of the served and unserved communities across the state.**
  - **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL's collection has been slightly refined. Due to budgetary issues and other factors, the State library is no longer adding fiction bestsellers to its collection but, as its own public library, NDSL's collection is still meeting the needs of underserved populations within the state.
- 1.7 **Offer professional reference services to library staff, state and local governments, and all North Dakotans.**
  - **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL currently uses its staff to provide reference services to each of the targeted groups.
- 1.8 **Provide statewide cataloging services.**
  - **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL currently provides cataloging services to 45 school and public libraries throughout North Dakota.

**1.9 Continue existing partnerships and develop new partnerships that increase awareness to the broadest array of information resources.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL has maintained existing partnerships and has added new partnerships to increase awareness of available information resources.

***Goal 2: Institutional Capacity and Support***

The North Dakota State Library provides services and resources towards advancing and improving the institutional capacity of the state's library community to meet the demands of the public and support the continued professional development and training of the state's library workforce.

**LSTA Priority: 3**

**Intents:**

- Improve the library workforce
- Improve the library community's physical and technological infrastructure
- Improve library operations

**NDSL Activities:**

**2.1 Provide continued library development programming and resources to assist libraries in meeting the needs of their patrons and communities.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL provided services to the library community and created a new position dedicated to serving Academic, Special, and Tribal libraries.

**2.2 Provide ongoing continuing education and professional development opportunities to librarians and library staff across North Dakota through workshops, seminars, and specialized trainings.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. Professional development has been provided through in-person and virtual trainings.

**2.3 Provide MLS grants.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. Eleven (11) grants have been awarded since 2018.

**2.4 Offer IT support to libraries to ensure North Dakota libraries are equipped to meet the informational, educational, and service needs of their patrons.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL's IT support services have met, and are continuing to meet, the needs of North Dakota's library community.

**2.5 Deliver marketing support to libraries through specialized materials, trainings, and related resources that assist them in their outreach to patrons and other key stakeholder groups.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL provides ongoing support through training, newsletter articles, and its Library Marketing Group, which was created to provide marketing assistance and guidance to libraries.

**2.6 Coordinate with librarians the promotion and management of the annual statewide summer reading program to promote literacy and raise library awareness.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL provides manuals each year. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, NDSL switched to an online virtual kickoff event for the summer reading program in 2020. The virtual format continued in 2021 and plans are to hold a virtual kickoff event again in 2022.

**Goal 3: Lifelong Learning**

The North Dakota State Library strives to enrich the lives of North Dakotans by offering services and programs that support and promote continued lifelong learning.

**LSTA Priorities:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7

**Intent:** Improve users' general knowledge and skills

**NDSL Activities:**

**3.1 Conduct outreach activities to the public through collaboration with all types of libraries, workshops, events, programs, and marketing of available services and resources.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL provides support to libraries for outreach activities, has conducted professional development at the local level, provides frequent information through newsletters and social media, and offers consulting services.

**3.2 Actively promote and provide library and information materials to North Dakota libraries, state agencies, and the general public.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL issues three newsletters. The first newsletter, 'The Flickertale,' is sent weekly to the state's library community. The second newsletter, 'Connections,' is sent monthly to state government agencies. 'Discovery' is the third newsletter, which is an annual publication for Talking Book patrons. NDSL has done an effective job at using social media changes to promote programs, services, and resources to the public.

**3.3 Provide current and relevant databases, and promote their availability via the North Dakota State Library newsletter, website, and social media.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. Databases are updated to maintain relevancy to both the needs of all libraries and patrons. Online Resources have been successfully promoted through NDSL's website and social media channels.

**3.4 Develop, promote and facilitate resource sharing among all North Dakota libraries.**

- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL participates in the statewide consortium, ODIN, and the statewide e-book public library consortium, Library2Go.
- 3.5 **Develop collaborative and strategic partnerships with relevant state agencies, schools, and community-based organizations in order to maximize service potential and extend outreach to North Dakotans.**
- **Assessment:** Partially achieved. This goal has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. NDSL has added a few partnerships and did create a new position focused on increasing partnerships with state agencies.
- 3.6 **Through collaborative partnerships with public and/or private partners, develop relationships with North Dakota’s tribal communities and libraries.**
- **Assessment:** Partially achieved. NDSL has added a new Academic, Special and Tribal Library specialist who focuses on these types of libraries. Work is ongoing to build these partnerships and make inroads with these libraries.

**Goal 4: Human Services**

The North Dakota State Library provides all North Dakotans with access to relevant library services, resources, and information that effectively addresses personal and professional needs of individuals and the civic, cultural, and economic needs of our communities.

**LSTA Priorities:** 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7

**Intent:** Improve users’ ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family, or household finances

**NDSL Activities:**

- 4.1 **Explore and facilitate a statewide financial literacy program, such as ALA’s ‘Money Smart Week.’**
- **Assessment:** Not achieved. NDSL only discussed a plan. Nothing was developed or implemented.
- 4.2 **Continue to provide and promote the annual summer reading program to promote literacy, engage children and young people, and connect young families with the library community.**
- **Assessment:** Achieved. NDSL’s literacy specialist and marketing specialist coordinate to launch the summer reading program. These specialists collaborate in developing (or updating) and distributing manuals. The library specialist presents an annual workshop on the summer reading theme for librarians. This workshop is conducted in-person at locations throughout the state or, as has been necessary, online.
- 4.3 **Explore and enhance partnerships with state and local governments and other groups that advance libraries’ ability to aid in statewide and community-specific workforce development.**

- **Assessment:** Not achieved. Although NDSL did have several discussions with North Dakota Workforce Development, nothing came to fruition from these conversations.

#### IV. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS

##### Part A. Retrospective Questions

A-1. To what extent did your five-year plan activities make progress towards each goal? Where progress was not achieved as anticipated, discuss what factors (e.g., staffing, budget, over-ambitious goals, partners) contributed?

**Goal 1:** The North Dakota State Library enhances access to information by providing libraries, citizens, government agencies, and other key stakeholders with access to materials, electronic resources, and professional staff to meet the informational needs of all North Dakotans.

- **Progress Towards Goal:** Overall, progress towards Goal 1 was partially achieved. In fact, progress was mostly achieved with seven of the nine activities achieved. The remaining two activities were only partially achieved due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and staffing changes, which limited or temporarily stopped progress towards full achievement. But for these factors, NDSL would likely have achieved all activities for this goal.

**Goal 2:** The North Dakota State Library provides services and resources towards advancing and improving the institutional capacity of the state's library community to meet the demands of the public and support the continued professional development and training of the state's library workforce.

- **Progress Towards Goal:** Progress toward Goal 2 was achieved with all six activities achieved.

**Goal 3:** The North Dakota State Library strives to enrich the lives of North Dakotans by offering services and programs that support and promote continued lifelong learning.

- **Progress Towards Goal:** Progress toward Goal 3 was partially achieved with four of six activities fully achieved. Two activities were partially achieved due primarily to lack of involvement and/or interest from partners. Again, disruptions from the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to failure to fully achieve these activities.

**Goal 4:** The North Dakota State Library provides all North Dakotans with access to relevant library services, resources, and information that effectively addresses personal and professional needs of individuals and the civic, cultural, and economic needs of our communities.

- **Progress Towards Goal:** Progress toward Goal 4 was, at minimum, partially achieved with only one of three activities achieved. The remaining two activities were not achieved as objectives for both activities were mostly over-ambitious and, to lesser extent, stifled by the pandemic and lack of willing partners.

**A-2. 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?**

NDSL’s four goals are developed based on the Measuring Success focal areas of Information Access, Lifelong Learning, and Institutional Capacity.

**A-3. Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for your five-year plan activities? (Yes/No)**

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

NDSL did impact the current and future library workforce through Library Development and Continuing Education, which exceeds 10 percent of the total resources committed. NDSL does offer an MLIS grant; however, this does not meet the 10 percent mark. Through our Talking Book service, NDSL has impacted individuals with disabilities; this exceeds the 10 percent mark. School-aged children across the state have been impacted through OLR and literacy kits, exceeding the 10 percent of the total resources committed.

## **Part B. Process Questions**

**B-1. How have you used any data from the State Program Report (SPR) and elsewhere (e.g., Public Libraries Survey) to guide activities in the five-year plan?**

The activities as reported in the five-year evaluation were based on and guided by the five-year plan. The information gathered by NDSL’s executive team informs the State Program Reports (SPR). In turn, SPR data guides the analysis of all NDSL programs and services.

**B-2. Specify any modifications you made to the five-year plan. What was the reason for this change?**

No changes were made to the five-year plan.

**B-3. How and with whom have you shared data from the SPR and from other evaluation resources? How have you used the last five-year evaluation to inform data collected**



**for the new five-year evaluation? How have you used this information throughout this five-year cycle?**

NDSL has shared data from the old and new SPR with multiple entities. The information is shared with the North Dakota Library Coordinating Council (NDLCC), who acts as the agency's advisory council, in written and verbal reports quarterly. Data is shared with the North Dakota Office of Management and Budget (OMB) through the biennial budgeting process. It is shared with the legislators via North Dakota's Legislative Council through reports. A biennial report is produced which includes narratives and statistical information on our federal programs as reported on in this document. That report is made available as a state document on NDSL's website. It is also sent to the Governor's office and the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

### **Part C. Methodology Questions**

**C-1. Identify how you implemented an independent five-year evaluation using the criteria described in the section of this guidance document called 'Selection of an Independent Evaluator.'**

NDSL issued a Request for Proposal to consultants throughout the United States. NDSL selected Jason Matthews, JM Strategies LLC, as evaluator based on his prior work with NDSL on strategic planning, research, and facilitation. Matthews also conducted the evaluation process in 2017 and is very familiar with NDSL and the North Dakota library community.

**C-2. Describe the types of statistical and qualitative methods (including administrative records) used in conducting the five-evaluation. Assess their validity and reliability.**

NDSL worked with JM Strategies to develop the questions for both the benchmark survey and the focus group sessions. NDSL staff introduced Jason Matthews as the facilitator for each of the focus group sessions. Staff observed and, when appropriate, asked follow-up questions and shared additional information during the sessions.

Matthews briefed the State Librarian on all research findings.

**C-3. Describe the stakeholders involved in the various stages of the five-year evaluation. How did you engage them?**

The stakeholders involved in this evaluation process were: Librarians and staff members of North Dakota's library community and North Dakota State Library staff. These stakeholders were engaged through either the benchmark online survey or focus group sessions.

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

Key findings and recommendations will be shared on NDSL's website, via our newsletter, North Dakota State Library *Flickertale*, and at the a NDLCC quarterly meeting. The evaluation report will also be shared with the North Dakota Department

of Public Instruction's (DPI) administration team, which consists of the State Superintendent and three assistant superintendents.

## PART 4: APPENDIX

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**A SPECIAL NOTE ON THE PROCESS:** This evaluation process was qualitative rather than quantitative utilizing focus group sessions, interviews, and self-evaluation.

### ACRONYMS

CSLP	Collaborative Summer Library Program
ILL	InterLibrary Loan
ILMS	Institute of Museum and Library Services
ILS	Integrated Library System
IT	Information Technology
LSTA	Library Services and Technology Act
MLIS	Masters of Library and Information Sciences
NDLA	North Dakota Library Association
NDLCC	North Dakota Library Coordinating Council
NDSL	North Dakota State Library
ODIN	Online Dakota Information Network
OLR	Online Library Resources
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalog
SPR	State Program Report

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