



Library Services and Technology Act 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan Evaluation

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Project Commissioned by the Tennessee State Library & Archives



STRATEGIES

Evaluation Conducted by JM Strategies LLC
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Part 1: Evaluation Summary

The Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) administers a grants-to-states program through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA).

The Tennessee State Library & Archives (TSLA) was awarded \$3,395,186 for its five-year LSTA plan, 2018-2022. The funds were allocated to 10 programs and services, which are in support of TSLA's five-year LSTA goals and are provided to the Volunteer State's public libraries and residents. In accordance with IMLS requirements, this report provides an assessment of the findings from evaluation of TSLA's programs, services, and five-year goals.

Evaluation Methodology

TSLA hired Jason Matthews of JM Strategies (Consultant) to conduct an evaluation process that was conducted through three online surveys, three focus group sessions, and interviews with TSLA's program managers and State Librarian and Archivist.

- **Online Surveys:** An online survey was developed and sent to public librarians in August 2021. The information collected from this survey provided direction to a follow-up survey of regional library staff, which was distributed in late September 2021. The final survey was conducted in early November and was sent to TSLA's eight program managers. This final survey built upon the findings of the first two surveys and asked managers to assess their programs and identify any areas for improvement.
- **Focus Group Sessions:** Focus group sessions were held with members of the Tennessee Advisory Council for Libraries (TACL) and public librarians throughout the state. These focus group sessions were held via Zoom in early October and early December.
- **Program Managers' Interviews:** Upon review of the findings of all quantitative and qualitative data, the Consultant conducted one-on-one interviews with each TSLA program manager and the State Librarian and Archivist. In these sessions, the Consultant went over the research data collected for the managers' respective programs and sought additional input from the professionals.

The results from each research method were reviewed, tabulated, and organized by the Consultant and presented TSLA's LSTA evaluation team.

Summary Assessment of LSTA-Funded Programs and Services

TSLA's developed three goals, which were rooted in IMLS' three focal goals of Lifelong Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Learning. Specific objectives were developed for each LSTA-funded program and service.

Goal 1: All Tennessee residents will have the reading skills, information resources, and library services to succeed in school, at work, and in their daily lives.

- **IMLS Focal Area:** Lifelong Learning

– TSLA Programs and Initiatives (4):

○ **Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.): 24.00% of LSTA monies**

Through the Tennessee Regional Library System, TSLA uses LSTA funds to leverage purchasing power to license downloadable content for libraries. This program achieved its goals and objectives. In fact, R.E.A.D.S. greatly exceeded its objectives for increased circulation and number of card holders using the program for each year.

○ **Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL): 22.40% of LSTA monies**

TEL provides statewide access licensed, full-text periodicals and reference resources at no charge to users. TEL partially achieved its goals and objectives. This specific program, along with a few others, were directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused a decline in retrievals in 2020. Data also found fewer retrievals from World Book and Ancestry, which impacted intended retrieval targets.

○ **Materials for the Disadvantaged: 14.93% of LSTA monies**

TSLA uses LSTA dollars to support the purchase of books and other library material for local libraries to meet the need of disadvantaged residents. Goals and objectives were partially achieved for Material for the Disadvantaged. Again, like TEL, circulation numbers were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

○ **Library for Accessible Books and Media (LABM): 1.88% of LSTA monies**

LABM provides public library service for any Tennessee resident of any age who has a physical disability that prevents them from using standard print resources. The goal and objectives for this program were partially achieved with circulation targets falling short in 2019 and again in 2020 due to limited staff access to the State Library at the start of the pandemic along with USPS mail disruption and pandemic-related safety concerns.

Goal 2: All Tennessee residents will be able to locate and access library and information services that are relevant to their lives through the provision of traditional reading materials, non-print media, online and downloadable resources, and electronic networks.

– IMLS Focal Area: Information Access

– TSLA Programs and Initiatives (2):

▪ **ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog): 11.81% of LSTA monies**

Tennessee's statewide online catalog, ShareIt contains the holdings of all public libraries, enables electronic access to the holdings of several academic libraries, provides a cataloging resource to libraries, and also serves as Tennessee's interlibrary loan system. Goals and objectives for ShareIt were partially achieved as the number of interlibrary loans surpassed established goals and satisfaction rates were very close to intended targets. The following three contributing factors did, however, impact ShareIt which prevented the full achievement of goals. First, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all transactions. Second, the removal of a significant number of obsolete records from library systems. Finally, the University of Tennessee-Knoxville's

(UTK) database cleanup and weeding which removed more than a million titles from its collection. Upon close inspection, these three factors had a large impact on ShareIt.

- **Nationwide Interlibrary Loan: 0.07% of LSTA monies**
TSLA facilitates interlibrary loan requests that cannot be filled within the statewide online union catalog. Goals and objectives were partially achieved and mostly met.

Goal 3: All Tennessee residents will benefit from enhanced library and information services because library staff members have the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to offer high-quality 21st library services.

- **IMLS Focal Area: Institutional Capacity**
- **TSLA Programs and Initiatives (4):**
 - **Network Service Consultants (NSC) Program: 12.11% of LSTA monies**
The NSC program provides free technical support and information systems support work to public libraries. It is one of the most popular of TSLA's LSTA-funded programs. Goals and objectives for NSC have been partially achieved.
 - **Technology Grants: 9.23% of LSTA monies**
TSLA provides matching technology grants to public libraries, which enables the replacement of computers, software, and networking equipment. Goals and objectives have been partially achieved.
 - **Information Technology Infrastructure: 1.70% of LSTA monies**
This is an internal program within the Tennessee Regional Library System and TSLA's Planning and Development Staff. Goals and objectives have been achieved and fully met. Satisfaction among users is very high and TSLA is responding to suggestions and requests from users.
 - **Continuing Education: 1.15% of LSTA monies**
TSLA's continuing education goals and objectives were only partially achieved. This is directly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic, which prevented in-person meetings/conferences and required the adoption of online video conferencing.

Review: Key Findings by Program and Service

- **Achieved:** Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.), Information Technology Infrastructure
- **Partially Achieved:** ShareIt, Network Service Consultants (NSC) Program, Nationwide Interlibrary Loan, Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL), Materials for the Disadvantaged, Library for Accessible Books and Media, Technology Grants, Continuing Education
- **Not Achieved:** No programs or services

Part 2: Background and Context

About the Tennessee State Library & Archives

As a division within the Office of the Tennessee Secretary of State, the Tennessee State Library & Archives (TSLA) is the official repository for the permanent records of the State of Tennessee.

TSLA's mission is to collect and preserve books and records of historical, documentary and reference value, and encourage and promote public library development throughout Tennessee.



About this Project

This evaluation project was commissioned by the Tennessee State Library & Archives in accordance with the requirements as set forth by the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS), which administers a grants-to-states program through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The following three individuals served on the project evaluation team:

- Charles (Chuck) Sherrill, Tennessee State Librarian and Archivist
- Jennifer Cowan-Henderson, TSLA Director of Planning and Development
- Jason Matthews – Consultant, JM Strategies LLC

Challenges Facing Tennessee's Library Community

TSLA developed its current five-year plan to direct the application of LSTA funds to programs and services that meet IMLS' three focal goals of Lifelong Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Learning.

Guided by IMLS's focal areas, TSLA developed its current plan to tackle a twin set of unique challenges confronting both the Volunteer State's population and library community.

- **Challenge 1 – Demographics:** As of 2021, the Volunteer State's population is estimated to be 6,975,218. This marks an increase of 324,024 residents since the current LSTA plan was developed in 2017. Tennessee is among the nation's fastest growing states. Demographers forecast the state's population will exceed seven million by 2022 and anticipate continued growth well into the 2020s.

While this news is positive, it is counter-balanced by 2020 Census data that found Tennessee has the ninth highest poverty rate among states in the nation. Approximately 15.2 percent of Tennesseans live below the poverty line. Of particular concern is the high rate of poverty among Tennessee's children. More than 40 percent of Tennessee's

children are “at-risk” based on their economic status. A December 2020 study found only 34.9 percent of students meet expectations in English Language Arts (ELA) Standards. The state’s adult literacy rate is 86.8 percent.

- **Challenge 2 – Inadequate Funding for Public Libraries:** It goes without saying that public libraries are essential to meeting literacy, learning, and information needs. Unfortunately, the state’s library community’s ability to address these issues is, to a large extent, hamstrung by another challenge: Local funding for public libraries is among the least adequately funded in the nation. This has been a constant throughout the years as documented in previous LSTA evaluations and five-year plans. It remains the same in 2021 with most libraries being managed by staff with little to no formal training in library science and inadequate funding to provide the full range of essential library and information resources.

TSLA’s LSTA-Funded Programs and Services

TSLA uses LSTA funds to provide 10 programs and services. Taken together these programs and services aim to address the above challenges by meeting the literacy and information needs of Tennesseans and the professional development and institutional capacity demands of the state’s 288 public libraries.

- **Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL)**
[IMLS Focal Area: Lifelong Learning](#)

TEL provides statewide access licensed, full-text periodicals and reference resources at no charge to users. The sharing of statewide electronic library resources provides access to information to all Tennesseans and promotes lifelong learning. TEL has thousands of full-text periodical and reference sources on a wide variety of topics such as current events, social issues, health information, reading suggestions, career assistance, and more. TEL has been in existence since 1999. It is available to anyone in Tennessee from any Internet-connected device and helps lessen the impact of low public library funding throughout the state.

- **Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.)**
[IMLS Focal Area: Lifelong Learning](#)

The Tennessee Regional Library System manages the Regional eBook and Download System (R.E.A.D.S.), which uses LSTA funds to leverage the purchasing power available to license downloadable content. In most instances, content available through the R.E.A.D.S. program represents the only downloadable content available through the libraries.

- **Materials for the Disadvantaged**
[IMLS Focal Area: Lifelong Learning](#)

TSLA uses LSTA dollars to support the purchase of books and other library material for local libraries. These materials are selected locally and ordered centrally. Local libraries are instructed to use their materials allocations to purchase items that meet the need of disadvantaged residents. In some instances, materials purchased are specifically for

outreach efforts, such as services to daycare centers or senior care facilities. At some libraries, particularly those in very small, poor communities, the materials are used to purchase materials that serve the general population.

- **Library for Accessible Books and Media (LABM)**

- [IMLS Focal Area: Lifelong Learning](#)

Formally known as the Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, LABM is an affiliate of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, a unit of the Library of Congress. LABM provides public library service for any Tennessee resident of any age who has a physical disability that prevents them from using standard print resources. This includes persons who are blind, persons who have low vision, persons who have difficulty holding a book or turning pages due to manual dexterity problems, and persons diagnosed with reading disabilities.

Materials provided through LABM include braille, audio (and playback equipment), and large print books and magazines. Materials are delivered to and returned from the registered person via the U.S. Postal Service's "Free Matter for the Blind and Physically Handicapped Persons" mailing privilege.

LABM has made great strides during the plan in keeping up with new technologies, including digital formats for audio books, digital books on USB devices, and the addition of the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service. LABM provides readers' advisory services, processes requests for physical materials, distributes braille, large print, audio books, and magazines and players, and administers the downloading site.

- **ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog)**

- [IMLS Focal Area: Information Access](#)

ShareIt, Tennessee's statewide online catalog, contains the holdings of all public libraries in the Volunteer State. The service also enables electronic access to the holdings of several academic libraries. ShareIt provides a quality cataloging resource without direct cost to libraries and also serves as Tennessee's interlibrary loan system.

- **Nationwide Interlibrary Loan (OCLC / Formerly known as Interloan Assistance)**

- [IMLS Focal Area: Information Access](#)

TSLA facilitates interlibrary loan requests that cannot be filled within the statewide online union catalog. These requests are referred to two regional centers that use OCLC's Group Access Capability (GAC) to identify potential loaning libraries and to initiate requests.

- **Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program**

- [IMLS Focal Area: Institutional Capacity](#)

The Network Services staff provides free technical support services and performs information systems support work of advanced difficulty for public libraries and TSLA. The Network Services Manager and four Network Service Consultants determine current and future technology requirements through research and library interviews; plan and

implement network developments and upgrades accordingly; install and upgrade microcomputer hardware and software; consult with library personnel in assessing information systems planning an physical facility planning; develop training aids and materials appropriate for public and regional library staff members and plan, organize, and conduct basic and advanced training sessions in both classroom and on-site settings.

- **Technology Grants**

- IMLS Focal Area: Institutional Capacity**

- Matching technology grants provide a means by which public libraries, regardless of size or funding level, can replace computer hardware, software, and networking equipment. The matching technology grants allow libraries to stay current and to expand the technology they can offer their patrons. This program is especially important in replacing and/or updating outdated computers and related technology. These grants enable libraries, many of which are underfunded, to stretch their local funds to offer an essential service to the public.

- **Information Technology Infrastructure**

- IMLS Focal Area: Institutional Capacity**

- A small portion of LSTA funds are directed to ensure TSLA's public library support system, including regional libraries and the TSLA Planning and Development Section, has the technology needed to deliver high-quality support services to local libraries statewide. This includes the maintenance of existing hardware, software, and other network devices as well as upgrades to these systems.

- **Continuing Education**

- IMLS Focal Area: Institutional Capacity**

- Developing the capacity of library staff to assist the public is an ongoing need throughout Tennessee. Providing both online and in-person learning opportunities is essential to supply high quality 21st century library services. WebJunction provides online training sessions which library staff, even in remote regions of the state, can take advantage of whenever convenient. Working with the Tennessee Library Association, training presented by a nationally recognized speaker reaches an expanded statewide audience.

TSLA's 2020 LSTA Budget

TSLA's total LSTA award was \$3,395,186. The funds were designated as follows:

| Project | Expenditure | Percentage of Award |
|--|------------------------|---------------------|
| Administrative Costs | \$ 24,327.45 | 0.72 % |
| Library for Accessible Books and Media | \$ 63,922.61 | 1.88% |
| Tennessee Electronic Library | \$ 760,352.91 | 22.40% |
| Materials for the Disadvantaged | \$ 507,034.05 | 14.93% |
| ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog) | \$ 401,016.00 | 11.81% |
| Interloan Assistance | \$ 2,490.87 | 0.07% |
| Continuing Education | \$ 38,954.78 | 1.15% |
| Network Service Consultants (NSC) | \$ 411,316.99 | 12.11% |
| Technology Grants | \$ 313,350.99 | 9.23% |
| Regional e-Book and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.) | \$ 814,730.15 | 24.00% |
| Information Technology Infrastructure | \$ 57,689.80 | 1.70% |
| | \$ 3,395,186.00 | 100.00% |

TSLA's 2018-2022 Goals

TSLA's 2018-2022 goals, along with corresponding IMLS focal areas and LSTA-funded programs and services are as follows...

- **Goal 1: All Tennessee residents will have the reading skills, information resources, and library services to succeed in school, at work, and in their daily lives.**
 - **IMLS Focal Area:** Lifelong Learning
 - **TSLA Programs and Initiatives (4):** Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL); Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.); Materials for the Disadvantaged; and Library for Accessible Books and Media (formerly Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped)

- **Goal 2: All Tennessee residents will be able to locate and access library and information services that are relevant to their lives through the provision of traditional reading materials, non-print media, online and downloadable resources, and electronic networks.**
 - **IMLS Focal Area:** Information Access
 - **TSLA Programs and Initiatives (2):** ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog) and Nationwide Interlibrary Loan

- **Goal 3: All Tennessee residents will benefit from enhanced library and information services because library staff members have the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to offer high-quality 21st library services.**

- **IMLS Focal Area:** Institutional Capacity
- **TSLA Programs and Initiatives (4):** Network Service Consultants (NSC) Program, Technology Grants, Information Technology Infrastructure, and Continuing Education

Evaluation Process and Methodology

The purpose of this evaluation is to verify whether the activities completed by TSLA in these ten programs and services met TSLA's goals and were in compliance with IMLS' three focal areas: Lifelong Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Capacity.

The evaluation process was conducted through a series of four online surveys, three focus group sessions, and interviews with the eight TSLA program managers and the State Librarian and Archivist.

Online Surveys:

- **Survey 1 – Public Librarians' Survey:** The first online survey was of public librarians. This survey was developed and approved for distribution in mid-August. TSLA emailed the survey to public librarians on August 30. Responses were accepted through September 13, 2021. Ninety public librarians participated in the survey.
- **Survey 2 – Regional Staff Survey:** Upon review of the data from the public librarians' survey, a second survey was developed and emailed by TSLA to regional library staff on September 21. Those contacted had until September 27, 2021 to submit their responses. Twenty-six individuals took this survey.
- **Survey 3 – LSTA Program Managers' Survey:** The final survey included TSLA's eight program managers was conducted in early November. They were asked to gauge their own program(s) and note successes and areas for improvement. The results of this survey were used to help create topics for focus group sessions with regional librarians, which were conducted December 9 and 10, 2021.

Focus Group Sessions:

- **Session 1 – TACL Members:** Members of the Tennessee Advisory Council for Libraries (TACL) participated in a focus group session, which took place as part of the council's October 8, 2021 meeting. Prior to the session, council members were asked to rank TSLA's LSTA-funded programs and services in order of importance to the libraries they represent. The results of the survey question along with a comparison of the findings from the public librarians and regional staff surveys were presented as part of the focus group session. Questions were then asked seeking additional insights as to the basis for members' survey responses and recommendations on programs and services.
- **Sessions 2 and 3 – Public Librarians:** Two additional focus group sessions were held on December 9 and 10, 2021. Sixteen public librarians, with two representatives from each of the state's regions, were invited to participate in the sessions. Thirteen librarians participated in the focus group sessions. Librarians were asked to identify the most helpful of LSTA-funded programs and services, how TSLA could make programs and services

more useful and easier to access, identify any direct services that should be offered that are not currently offered, and to provide insights and suggestions on the Network Services Consultants (NSC), Library for Accessible Books and Media, and Material for the Disadvantaged programs. Participants were invited to provide comments on LSTA funds should be provided and/or used to better serve their libraries.

Program Managers' Interviews: The information collected through this extensive research process was analyzed and provided the basis for the Consultant's interviews with TSLA's program managers and the State Librarian and Archivist. These interviews were conducted via Zoom during the weeks of December 14 and 20, 2021.

Part 3: Evaluation Report

Progress Toward Reaching Goal 1

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Goal 1: | All Tennessee residents will have the reading skills, information resources, and library services to succeed in school, at work, and in their daily lives. |
| IMLS Focal Area: | Lifelong Learning |
| Needs: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tennessee’s public libraries lack funding to provide basic library and information resources. ▪ 191,565 residents of Tennessee are visually impaired. |
| Programs and Services: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) ▪ R.E.A.D.S. (Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System) ▪ Materials for the Disadvantaged ▪ Library for Accessible Books and Media (LABM) |
| Progress Toward Reaching Goal: | Overall, Goal 1 was partially achieved. There were four separate programs under this goal. The objectives for R.E.A.D.S. were fully achieved and surpassed. The three remaining programs – TEL, Materials for the Disadvantaged, and LABM – partially achieved their objectives. |

Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL)

Five-Year Plan Objectives:

- The number of full-text retrievals will increase by 5 percent each year.
- A survey of users will be conducted in LSTA 2018 and LSTA 2020. Each survey will show that 90 percent of respondents are pleased with the service.

Progress Toward Objectives for TEL: Partially achieved

With an objective of 9,405,017 retrievals for 2018, TEL reached 10,870,193 retrievals. The following year’s objective of 9,875,268 was easily exceeded with 10,021,151 retrievals. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the number of retrievals in 2020. Not surprisingly, the number of retrievals in 2020 was 9,717,419. Part of this decrease can be attributed to fewer retrievals from World Book and Ancestry. The primary users of World Book are students and Ancestry is most popular with patrons aged 50 or older. Numbers for 2021 are incomplete but first quarter numbers find TEL on track to meet or fall slightly short of its objective of 10,887,483 retrievals.

User surveys were conducted in 2018 and 2020. The objective was for each survey to show 90 percent satisfaction from respondents. Both surveys fell slightly short with 85 percent expressing satisfaction in the 2018 survey and 84 percent satisfied in 2020.

Librarian research data collected through this evaluation process finds TEL to be one of the most popular and important of LSTA-funded programs and services. When asked to rank the most important program for the libraries they represent, TACL members ranked TEL first. Public librarians and regional library staff consistently gave high marks to the program, although minor frustrations were expressed in surveys and the focus groups. These complaints all centered on perceived user-unfriendliness, the site's "busyness," and a lack of adequate communication regarding site updates. A desire to have a TEL trainer provide updates and direction library staff was also expressed. Additionally, a few librarians also stated the program needs to be better promoted to the public. This sentiment is revealing when placed in the context that a plurality of regional library staff selected TEL as an "under-utilized" program. Even with these issues, TEL was identified by librarians as an essential and vital service.

Consultant's Assessment: Addressing communications and promotion is necessary in the new five-year plan and will only strengthen this popular and vital program. TSLA's avenues in addressing the site's "busyness," while limited, should be addressed with the vendors.

R.E.A.D.S. (Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System)

Objectives:

- Annual circulation will increase each year.
- The number of card holders using the service will increase each year.
- A survey of users will be conducted in LSTA 2018 and LSTA 2020. Each survey will show that 90 percent of respondents are pleased with the service.

Progress Toward Objectives for R.E.A.D.S.: Achieved – fully met and significantly exceeded

The numbers say it all when it comes to the success of R.E.A.D.S. The program consistently met and exceeded each of its three objectives.

Annual circulation numbers from 2018 through 2019 reveal the following...

- | | | |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ▪ 2018: | Objective: 3,926,981 | Final Measure of Success: 4,122,439 |
| ▪ 2019: | Objective: 4,242,139 | Final Measure of Success: 4,809,722 |
| ▪ 2020: | Objective: 4,580,430 | Final Measure of Success: 5,146,727 |

Annual statistics for card holders registered a significant jump from the 2017 base of 89,747 to 194,239 in 2020. These noteworthy increases are matched by overwhelming user satisfaction. In 2018, 96 percent of respondents in the 2018 survey were satisfied in the program. Two years later, 99.5 percent – almost all – respondents expressed satisfaction with the program. It's a sentiment shared by librarians.

R.E.A.D.S. was the highest ranked program in terms of satisfaction by librarians surveyed and interviewed in the evaluation process. Regional library staff ranked the program at the bottom of under-utilized programs. Comments from focus group participants input collected on this

point in the focus groups underscored the value R.E.A.D.S. provides with librarians calling the program a “life-saver” and “loved.” Complaints, while few, were consistent as to the need for more popular titles and shorter wait times for newly published books. Follow-up interviews with TSLA staff revealed awareness of this challenge but acknowledgement that the only way to improve is with more funding.

Consultant’s Assessment: No changes are needed to R.E.A.D.S.

Materials for the Disadvantaged

Objectives:

- Sample circulation will show an average of at least 3 circulations per an item each year.
- A survey of public libraries will be conducted in LSTA 2018 and LSTA 2020. Each survey will show that 90 percent of respondents are pleased with the service.

Progress Toward Objectives for Materials for the Disadvantaged: Partially achieved

Statistics for Materials for the Disadvantaged are collected at the start of each year in January. Sample circulation numbers of four (4) circulations per item were met in 2018 and 2019. Data from 2020 and 2021 found two (2) circulations per item. There is no question these numbers are due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One can easily draw this inference based on the previous two years’ numbers and the overwhelming satisfaction rates of users that participated in surveys in 2018 (93 percent) and 2020 (97 percent).

Focus group participants stated they are glad that funds are earmarked for this purpose. One librarian stated to unanimous agreement in her group that because of the designated funds, her library can “buy things we normally would not buy.” Another said: “This program makes us make it a priority.” More than one focus group participant did say they would like to have more time to spend the funds. All focus group members described the program as helpful or beneficial. Survey comments, to the extent they were offered, reinforced what was heard in the focus groups. One survey respondent wrote: “More options and fewer restrictions for Materials for the Disadvantaged would be nice.”

Consultant’s Assessment: No changes are necessary.

Library for Accessible Books and Media (LABM)

(Formerly Tennessee Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped)

Objectives:

- Large print circulation will increase each year.
- A survey of users will be conducted in LSTA 2018, LSTA 2020, and LSTA 2022. Each survey will show that 95 percent of respondents are pleased with the service.
- The federally funded Reader Advisor will have 4,900 patron interactions each year.

Progress Toward Objectives for LABM: Partially achieved

Perhaps out of all of TSLA’s LSTA-funded programs, Library for Accessible Books and Media (LABM) was the most adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

While large print circulation increased in 2018, intended measures of success were slightly off in 2019 and significantly off once the pandemic hit. Users still expressed overwhelming (almost unanimous) satisfaction with the service. The 2018 survey found 99 percent satisfaction and the 2020 survey found 97 percent satisfaction among users. Still, patron interactions through the federally funded Reader Advisor missed targets in 2019, 2020, and 2021.

Circulation dropped significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic (although, it must be noted, that the 2019 target was missed). The primary and overriding reason for this drop can be attributed to limited staff access to the State Library building at the start of the pandemic. Once staff could safely return, TSLA imposed quarantine protocols for incoming mail. As much of the service operates on a turnaround basis in which the check-in of a book triggers a new book to be sent to a patron, few books were sent out. This problem was further compounded by USPS mail disruption and patron concerns about safely borrowing books.

Librarians who participated in the evaluation process identified LABM as a critical lifeline for some. However, there was wide agreement in the focus groups that more must be done to provide training to librarians and promote the service to the public. Some noted existing marketing materials are outdated and in need of updating.

Consultant's Assessment: While adversely and severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2019 numbers for circulation and patron interactions through the Reader Advisor were down. As such, marketing and promotion suggestions offered in this process should be seriously considered and addressed in the new five-year plan.

Progress Toward Reaching Goal 2

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Goal 2: | All Tennessee residents will be able to locate and access library and information resources that are relevant to their lives through the provision of traditional reading materials, non-print media, online and downloadable resources, and electronic networks. |
| IMLS Focal Area: | Information Access |
| Needs: | Many Tennessee public libraries lack funding to provide basic library and information resources. |
| Programs and Services: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog) ▪ Nationwide Interlibrary Loan (Interloan Assistance) |
| Progress Toward Reaching Goal: | Goal 2 was partially, if not significantly, achieved as objectives for ShareIt were partially achieved and Nationwide Interlibrary Loan mostly met all of its objectives. |

ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog)

Objectives:

- The number of full-text retrievals will increase by 5 percent each year.
- The number of records available will increase each year.
- A survey of users will be conducted in LSTA 2018 and LSTA 2020. Each survey will show that 90 percent of respondents are pleased with the service.

Progress Toward Objectives for ShareIt: Partially achieved

Starting with a base of 115,575 items loaned in 2017, consistent interlibrary loan increases were seen each year: 127,133 in 2018, 139,846 in 2019, and 146,838 in 2020. Projected increases are expected once the numbers for 2021 and 2022 are compiled.

The 2018 user survey found 83 percent satisfaction with the program, which was short of the targeted 90 percent goal. However, the 2020 survey – taken at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic – found 89 percent satisfaction, which practically matched the 90 percent targeted goal.

TSLA officials identified the following three primary factors as largely contributing to the inability to fully achieve ShareIt’s objectives...

- 1) The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted all transactions.
- 2) The removal of a significant number of obsolete records from library systems.
- 3) The University of Tennessee-Knoxville’s (UTK) database cleanup and weeding which removed more than a million titles from its collection.

Some issues were expressed during the focus group sessions regarding the need to promote the program along with the desire to have all library systems on the same interlibrary loan

system. Focus group participants also shared concerns and issues with the program that include the following...

- Lack of user-friendliness
- Inconsistencies with the system with searches too keyed in and requiring manual entering
- Issues with Auto-Graphics and couriers

Views expressed in the focus groups were echoed by one comment shared in the survey of public librarians that stated: "There could be lots of improvements to ShareIt."

With all of that stated, ShareIt was ranked as a top five LSTA-funded program in both surveys. Public librarians ranked ShareIt as the fourth most important to their libraries and regional library staff placed it in fifth place.

Consultant's Evaluation: TSLA recognizes both the program's importance and the need for improvements. The information collected in this evaluation process provides a roadmap for TSLA to make this popular program stronger.

Nationwide Interlibrary Loan (OCLC) (Formerly known as Interloan Assistance)

Objective: A survey of users will be conducted in LSTA 2018 and LSTA 2020. Each survey will show that 90 percent of respondents are pleased with the service.

Progress Toward Objectives for Nationwide Interlibrary Loan: Achieved – mostly met

The objective for the Nationwide Interlibrary Loan service was simple and straightforward. Two surveys were conducted measuring satisfaction with the program. Both surveys had small sample sizes. The 2018 survey had six participants all of whom were pleased with the service. Twenty-six participants took the 2020 survey and 88 percent of them (23 participants) identified as satisfied.

Looking at the evaluation process research data found regional library staff ranking the program as the fourth most important LSTA-funded program/service for their member libraries. In contrast, public librarians ranked it sixth – just outside of the five most important programs/services to their respective libraries. Criticisms of the service were limited and constructive with participating librarians advising there needs to be an improved process for the service.

Consultant's Assessment: Reviews of the service are strongly positive. As with all programs and services, tweaks can be made. In the case of OCLC, such changes are minor and the changes do not appear to be pressing.

Progress Toward Reaching Goal 3

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Goal 3: | All Tennessee residents will benefit from enhanced library and information services because library staff members have the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to offer high-quality 21 st century library services. |
| IMLS Focal Area: | Institutional Capacity |
| Needs: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most Tennessee libraries lack adequate information technology staff/support. ▪ Many Tennessee’s public libraries lack funding to provide basic library and information resources. ▪ Most Tennessee public libraries are small and lack adequate information technology staff/support. |
| Programs and Services: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program ▪ Technology Grants ▪ Information Technology Infrastructure ▪ Continuing Education |
| Progress Toward Reaching Goal: | Goal 3 was partially achieved. Of the four separate programs under this goal, Information Technology Infrastructure fully achieved its objectives, while the other three programs partially achieved their objectives. |

Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program

Objectives:

- Staff knowledge of technical issues will increase each year. Pre- and post-tests will be administered at an annual training event. Post-tests will show an increase in knowledge by 90 percent in LSTA 2020.
- Service desk tickets will be completed within three (3) days if a break/fix issue. Statistics will show an improvement from 85 percent to 90 percent of break/fix tickets completed within the timeframe.
- A survey of public libraries will be conducted each year. Overall, librarians will be 95 percent satisfied with the service.

Progress Toward Objectives for NSC: Partially achieved – mostly met

For public librarians, especially in small rural libraries, the National Services Consultant (NSC) program is regarded as a vital program. In evaluation focus group sessions, these librarians shared how the program has helped them with their IT issues. One participant said it plainly: “I don’t know where we’d be without NSCs.” When asked what degree of change is need to LSTA-funded programs and services, public librarians gave their highest response of ‘no change is needed’ to the NSC program.

Both the public librarians and regional library staff surveys had the NSC program fall out of the top five most important LSTA-funded programs and services. Two explanations were given in the evaluation process as to why this may be the case. The first explanation is that regional libraries are not direct users of the service. The second explanation reinforces the 'no change is needed' response rate. To borrow the old and grammatically incorrect cliché: "If ain't broke don't fix it." The program is working as intended.

The first two objectives were met throughout the life of this plan. The 2020 post-test staff goal was easily exceeded with a final result of 97 percent. Service desk ticket statistics all fell within the 85 to 90 percent range for 2018 (87 percent), 2019 (86 percent), and 2020 (86 percent). Ninety-five percent satisfaction rates were not met in the three annual surveys of public librarians. Those numbers averaged 90 percent, which is excellent but still short of the high bar of 95 percent that had been set.

Consultant's Assessment: This essential and innovative program is working as intended. No major – if any – changes are evident moving forward.

Technology Grants

Objectives:

- Percentage of applicants receiving grants will be 95 percent or higher.
- Of the public libraries receiving technology grants in any given year, each will have 85 percent of Internet accessible public use desktops and laptops less than five (5) years old.

Progress Toward Objectives for Technology Grants: Partially achieved

The first objective was built upon the 2017 base of 98 percent. Annual percentages for 2018, 2019, and 2020 were each 100 percent.

The numbers of the second objective fell moderately short of the 85 percent goal. The numbers for the years where data was collected for were 79 percent in 2018, 70 percent in 2019, and 75 percent in 2020.

The numbers are benchmarks but the sentiments expressed in the evaluation process were revealing and validate how important these grants are to libraries. During the focus group sessions, librarians used terms such as "life saver" and "essential" to describe the grants. These views validate the importance placed on the program as found by its second place ranking as the most important of LSTA-funded programs and services in both the public librarian and regional library staff surveys.

Consultant's Assessment: The program is working as intended. The second objective should be carried over into the new plan and the desired percentage should be realistically adjusted.

Information Technology Infrastructure

Objective: A survey of state library staff will be conducted every year. Each survey will show that 90 percent of respondents feel they have the technology needed to effectively support public libraries.

Progress Toward Objective for Information Technology Infrastructure: Achieved

This is an internal program within the Tennessee regional library system and TSLA's Planning and Development staff. Survey data from 2018, 2019, and 2020 were reviewed and found the following...

- **2018:** Fifty responded to the survey; 91 percent had the technology they needed.
- **2019:** Forty-one responded; 97 percent stated they had the technology they needed.
- **2020:** Forty-one responded; 95 percent indicated technology needs were met.

Seven suggestions were shared in the 2020 survey. All of them touched on the desire for more updated equipment, additional equipment/software for hybrid training, faster computers, etc. TSLA IT staff have been working on improvements.

Consultant's Assessment: The survey results speak for themselves. This service is working as intended.

Continuing Education

Objectives:

- Annual participation in WebJunction training webinars will increase each year.
- Annual attendance at a nationally recognized speaker event will happen each year.
- A survey of attendees will be conducted each year at the nationally recognized speaker event. Each survey will show that 90 percent of respondents are satisfied with the quality of the information presented.

Progress Toward Objectives for Continuing Education: Partially achieved

TSLA's best laid plans for Continuing Education were completely overturned by the COVID-19 pandemic. In-person meetings ended in March 2020. Eventually, virtual and hybrid meetings were offered to meet Continuing Education needs. Feedback collected in the evaluation process found a majority prefers face-to-face sessions due to the networking opportunities such meetings provide. However, a plurality of librarians do like the ease of online or hybrid sessions although they acknowledge face-to-face offers more tangible rewards. A common acknowledgement by almost all is that, moving forward, virtual meetings are here to stay.

An examination of the content of Continuing Education offerings does find some distinctions among types of librarians. Public librarians expressed a preference for "how to classes." This same group ranked Continuing Education fifth out of the top five most important LSTA-funded programs and services for their library. In contrast, regional library staff placed it near the bottom.

Even with the challenges of COVID-19, TSLA met many Continuing Education objectives. Annual participation in WebJunction training webinars blew past their targeted goals for three straight years – 2018, 2019, and 2020 – and are on track to exceed the goal for 2021.

| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| 2018 Goal: 678 | 2018 Result: 2,145 |
| 2019 Goal: 685 | 2019 Result: 3,679 |
| 2020 Goal: 692 | 2020 Result: 2,888 |
| 2021 Goal: 699 | 2021 Result: 528 (First quarter only) |

Two-hundred-eighty-seven attended the 2018 event, which exceeded the goal of 220 attendees. But numbers fell short in 2019 with only 103 attending instead of the targeted 222. In 2020, immediately before the pandemic hit, 241 participated in that year’s event – 17 more than the stated goal.

Surveys of attendees to these events registered satisfaction rates of: 79 percent in 2018, 88 percent in 2019, and 84 percent in 2020. These figures are below the targeted 95 percent rate.

Consultant’s Assessment: The pandemic has, most likely, forever changed the delivery of Continuing Education and professional development. TSLA is adjusting to this new reality to meet the needs of Tennessee’s library community. What is not in question is the quality of programs offered. Focus group participants and evaluation survey participants expressed pleasure at what has been offered. This gives TSLA a solid foundation on which to build priorities and objectives in the next five-year plan.

Responses 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?

Progress is discussed in great detail for every program and each of TSLA’s three goals within this Evaluation Report. TSLA achieved the goals and objectives for the Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.) and Information Technology Infrastructure. Goals and objectives were only partially achieved for the following programs and services: ShareIt, Network Service Consultants (NSC) Program, Nationwide Interlibrary Loan, Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL), Materials for the Disadvantaged, Library for Accessible Books and Media, Technology Grants, Continuing Education. As stated in the evaluation, many of these programs were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. TSLA does need to be more realistic in its measures of success for Technology Grants.

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?

The three goals listed in Tennessee’s five-year plan support the corresponding national priorities that are part of the Measuring Success focal areas and their intents. These corresponding priorities are Information Access, Lifelong Learning, and Institutional Capacity.

- **Information Access:** Two programs are in this focal area, the Statewide Online Catalog and Interloan Assistance. Both achieve positive results in users’ ability to obtain information resources.
- **Lifelong Learning:** Four programs are in this focal area: R.E.A.D.S., TEL, LABM, and Materials for the Disadvantaged. All achieved positive results in providing materials in order to improve users’ general knowledge and skills.
- **Institutional Capacity:** Four programs are in this focal area: NSC Program, Technology Grants, Information Technology Infrastructure, and Continuing Education. All four programs achieved positive results in improving the library workforce and library’s physical and technology infrastructure.

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

The majority of TSLA’s LSTA funding goes towards TEL and R.E.A.D.S. These programs are for all Tennesseans regardless of age, ethnicity, or disability. TSLA does, however, serve many Tennesseans who fit in these categories with the programs provided.

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?

Using a central, internal project management system, TSLA has been able to collate and share the data from the SPR to the project managers for LSTA, and that as

fostered conversation with the group about successes, changes, and future planning. This discussion has greatly assisted in having a larger view when looking at our individual programs and seeing where we can improve and grow. It has been extremely useful to have these group meetings to have centralized discussions focused on our LSTA program.

Overviews of LSTA programs are also provided on a quarterly basis to our regional administrative staff and three times a year to our Tennessee Advisory Council on Libraries (TACL). These overviews allow for a different perspective to be considered outside of the program manager to people who train others on some of the LSTA programs or are users of these programs themselves. Both of these meetings are chaired by the State Librarian and Archivist and the Director of Regional Libraries, and the discussions themselves were led by the LSTA Coordinator. These discussions include a review of the LSTA budget and spending to date as well as an overview of each program and any progress achieved to date.

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

No modifications have been 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?

As mentioned previously, data has been shared via meetings with the regional administrative staff quarterly and members of TACL three times a year. Updates on our LSTA programs are provided at each of these meetings and time is allowed for questions and general discussion. The evaluation will also be uploaded to the TSLA website.

The State Librarian and Archivist meets with the Secretary of State on a regular basis and provides updates to the LSTA programs during that time. Also, the TEL Administrator serves on several boards outside of TSLA and reports on TEL and other activities included in LSTA. These boards include Tenn-Share, a non-profit organization whose focus is sharing resources, and the Tennessee Library Association, the library association for the state.

Our last five-year evaluation was critical in providing a plan to keep stakeholders informed of LSTA funding and program successes throughout each funding year. These stakeholders now have a more concrete idea of how our funds are distributed and how these programs help the citizens of Tennessee.

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.’**

TSLA issued a Request for Quote to consultants throughout the United States. Based on the recommendation of the North Dakota State Librarian, TSLA invited Jason Matthews of JM Strategies to submit a quote. Having reviewed quotes and proposals, TSLA selected JM Strategies to serve as the evaluator.

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

TSLA worked with JM Strategies in creating the questions that were used for the three online surveys and focus group sessions that were conducted via Zoom. TSLA provided JM Strategies with data from LSTA Plan 2018-2022 Statistics and survey research collected from the LSTA 2020 Survey for Regional and P&D Staff and LSTA 2020 Survey, Part 2 (see Appendices).

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

Online surveys initially engaged public librarians, regional library system employees, and TSLA program managers. Focus group sessions involving members of the Members of the Tennessee Advisory Council of Libraries (TACL) and public librarians were held. Program managers and the State Librarian and Archivist were interviewed at the final stage of the evaluation process.

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

Key findings and recommendation will be shared by providing a copy of the evaluation to the program managers, members of TACL, and the regional library staff. Meetings conducted after the evaluation is complete will include an overview of the key findings and recommendations. The evaluation will also be posted to the TSLA website (<https://sos.tn.gov/tsla/guides/library-services-and-technology-act>) for public review, and a copy will be provided to the Secretary of State.

Appendices

Appendix A: List of Acronyms and Terms

CE: Continuing Education

FFY: Federal Fiscal Year

ILL: InterLibrary Loan

ILS: Integrated Library System

IMLS: Institute of Museum and Library Services

IT: Information Technology

LABM: Library for Accessible Books and Media

LSTA: Library Services and Technology Act

NSC: Network Service Consultants Program

OCLC: A global library cooperative

P&D: TSLA Planning and Development Unit

R.E.A.D.S.: Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System

ShareIt: Tennessee Statewide Online Catalog

TACL: Tennessee Advisory Council on Libraries

TEL: Tennessee Electronic Library

TSLA: Tennessee State Library and Archives

Appendix B: Public Librarians Survey Results

Please note: Percentages are rounded up so some total results may exceed 100 percent.

1. Please select your public library's classification.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----|-----|
| ▪ Level I (under 5,000) | 14 | 16% |
| ▪ Level II (5,000 – 9,999) | 0 | 22% |
| ▪ Level III (10,000 – 24,999) | 30 | 33% |
| ▪ Level IV (25,000 – 49,999) | 12 | 13% |
| ▪ Level V (50,000 – 300,000) | 14 | 16% |
| ▪ Other (over 300,001) | 0 | |

2. How many years have you been employed at public libraries?

| | | |
|----------------------|----|-----|
| ▪ Five or less years | 18 | 20% |
| ▪ 6 – 10 years | 24 | 27% |
| ▪ 11 – 19 years | 24 | 27% |
| ▪ 20 or more years | 24 | 27% |

3. Based on your first-hand experience, what is your level of satisfaction with the following LSTA-funded programs and services provided by the Tennessee State Library & Archives?

| | Very Satisfied | Generally Satisfied | Generally Dissatisfied | Very Dissatisfied | Neutral/Not Applicable |
|---|----------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) | 53 | 36 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.) | 74 | 16 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Materials for the Disadvantaged | 47 | 29 | 0 | 0 | 14 |
| Library for Accessible Books and Media | 48 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog) | 53 | 21 | 1 | 0 | 14 |
| Nationwide Interlibrary Loan | 50 | 27 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program | 52 | 15 | 1 | 0 | 20 |
| Technology Grants | 63 | 23 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Continuing Education | 57 | 30 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

Comments from Question 3:

- *"Generally Satisfied" is more positive than it appears. Generally Satisfied means good in many answers. TEL is great; however, I find it a bit difficult to navigate. Once you find what you need, it is great, but getting there is frustrating. For READS, absolutely awesome, however feedback I receive is that it is too long of a wait for the popular authors. It would be nice if someone from our county got a pop-up saying this book is available at your library. This way the wait might be shorter.*
- *I understand that there are never enough finances to keep up with the demand for READS materials, but patrons complain that the wait is much too long for newly published books.*

- *READS is extremely valuable and technology grants are a life-saver, or at least a computer service saver.*
- *TEL is a great resource! We promote it to the BOE, educators, homeschool parents, students. Tech grants provide us with a means to acquire updated technology that we would otherwise not be able to afford. CE in TN is wonderful. Virtual or in-person, trainings are great and much appreciated. We use what is learned to better serve our community. I hear nothing but compliments from the people we have signed up or referred to LABM. They are so grateful to be able to enjoy books again. READS is widely used and patrons love it. I use and I love it. ILL is also widely used by our patrons.*
- *TEL is not user friendly or intuitive.*
- *I did not like the LSTA grant being included this year with the other one.*
- *There could be lots of improvements to ShareIt.*

4. Please select the top five most important LSTA-funded programs and services to your library. (Please check up to five programs and services.)

| | |
|--|----|
| 1) <i>Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S)</i> | 87 |
| 2) <i>Technology Grants</i> | 78 |
| 3) <i>Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL)</i> | 59 |
| 4) <i>ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog)</i> | 52 |
| 5) <i>Continuing Education</i> | 48 |
| 6) <i>Nationwide Interlibrary Loan</i> | 33 |
| 7) <i>Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program</i> | 33 |
| 8) <i>Materials for the Disadvantaged</i> | 25 |
| 9) <i>Library for Accessible Books and Media</i> | 23 |

5. What degree of change is needed in each of the following service areas?

| | Very High Change | High Change | Moderate Change | Low Change | Very Low Change | No Change Needed |
|---|------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) | 2 | 1 | 23 | 12 | 18 | 31 |
| Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.) | 1 | 4 | 10 | 21 | 17 | 36 |
| Materials for the Disadvantaged | 0 | 1 | 15 | 13 | 15 | 39 |
| Library for Accessible Books and Media | 1 | 1 | 12 | 15 | 13 | 42 |
| ShareIt (Statewide Online Catalog) | 1 | 3 | 10 | 10 | 19 | 38 |
| Nationwide Interlibrary Loan | 2 | 3 | 6 | 15 | 14 | 43 |
| Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program | 0 | 2 | 7 | 8 | 12 | 48 |
| Technology Grants | 2 | 6 | 6 | 14 | 19 | 39 |
| Continuing Education | 2 | 4 | 12 | 10 | 20 | 38 |

Comments from Question 5:

- Accessible – more available large print and local and state newspapers read aloud.
- Have all library system on the same ShareIt.
- I can't imagine losing access to any of these important programs. They are all vital.

- I feel strongly that libraries should not be punished for what board members will not do. I hope that COVID has taught us anything that maybe Trustee conferences can be done virtually, that maybe an entire board could attend in their own home counties.
- I would encourage a reconsideration of the training hours required for public library administrative staff (25 hours). Public library administrators generally work long hours to provide the best for their communities with limited resources and staffing budgets. In addition to the training hours required for administrators, they are also responsible for planning and scheduling training time for their staff. It takes considerable time to plan and train library staff so that they receive the maximum benefit from the training opportunities, and this is time taken away from other duties related to managing the library. Many librarians at the management level have or are in the process of completing graduate school for MLIS degree. This additional schooling has already given library administrators a strong foundation and demonstrated their commitment to overall excellent Library service. Thank you for your consideration.
- It would be good to have a shorter turnaround time between applying and receiving the grant funds.
- It has been my experience that grant funding has a tendency to shift "midstream." Specifically, we are experiencing possible funding for an item and then are later told that item is no longer eligible or doesn't meet criteria. This is frustrating and disappointing to the grant applicant that has spent time and effort researching items that do meet the grant's original stated criteria, only to be told later that they do not. NSC Program – we love our NSC, but he has too many libraries to provide service to. Unless it's an emergency, we put in a help ticket and just have to wait until he can get to us; sometimes weeks.
- More funding (I know everyone wants more money).
- Personally, I don't like the way they have set up the employment section now. It would make it much easier for people to be able to find jobs without having to fill out the forms. I like the way it used to be.
- READS: More money towards new releases and perhaps less on language other than English as well as less on "romance" novels. Those two genres always seem to have many available while people wait several months for a new book. CE: Please offer all training virtually, including recordings which can be watched later and counted as CE hours. TEL: Patrons request car repair manuals (Chilton's perhaps?).
- TEL can sometimes be a little hard to navigate through to find what you are actually looking for.
- TEL is great, but a little hard to navigate. READS needs more copies of popular titles. More options and fewer restrictions for Materials for the Disadvantaged would be nice. Better marketing of LABM. OCLC needs a better process. Tech grants should not be reimbursement grants. It makes it difficult for libraries that really need these funds to take full advantage of them because they can't afford to make the purchases and wait for the money to come back.
- The moderate change referred to is to stay up to date technology and different platforms to share information. Everyone has done a spectacular job of providing different ways to engage during COVID. Thank you so much.
- The process of searching and requesting for an item is more difficult than it used to be. Wish we could print a reserve ticket for the front desk staff to put in book when on holding shelf. If we can do that already, we don't know the process of how to do this. Need knowledge of Nationwide Interlibrary Loan.
- The TEL page is "busy" I would like to see it simplified. ShareIt needs promotional materials and a commitment from more libraries to fully participate. I see lots of libraries skipped or not responding to requests I would like to see more "how to classes" for Continuing Education.

- With just one year of service, I have not studied some of the programs, but I really appreciate grants, and TEL and READS.
- With the circulation increase with e-books/e-audios, etc., it would be great to be able to add more titles to R.E.A.D.S. Technology is always changing so more money for technology grants is always helpful.

6. Are the number of training opportunities offered by regional libraries is...

| | | |
|------------------|----|------|
| ▪ Just right | 73 | 81 % |
| ▪ Not enough | 13 | 15 % |
| ▪ Too much | 3 | 3 % |
| ▪ Not applicable | 1 | 1 % |

7. Current regional training opportunities for my library staff...

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----|------|
| ▪ Meet staff needs | 81 | 90 % |
| ▪ Does not meet staff needs | 6 | 7 % |
| ▪ Not applicable | 3 | 3 % |

8. Please rank your preferred format for regional offered training sessions.

| | | |
|--|----|------|
| 1) In-person | 37 | 41 % |
| 2) Virtual | 24 | 27 % |
| 3) Hybrid (both in-person and virtual) | 23 | 26 % |
| 4) Not applicable | 6 | 7 % |

9. Please feel free to provide any further comment regarding your preferred format for regional offered training sessions.

- Conversations and visits just cannot be beat for communicating, encouraging, and helping each other.
- Due to COVID virtual is working for our staff.
- Enjoy the in-person training sessions as it's nice to talk privately with other library directors.
- I appreciate the virtual programs and I understand that some topics are far more effective in person. I am happy to attend either.
- I like in-person best. It's easier to concentrate on the content that way.
- I like the convenience of virtual, and understand that some topics work best in person.
- I prefer in person training but the option of being able to attend virtually in case of being short staffed is great. Virtual is the least preferred but great as an alternative. Thank you for the opportunity to attend virtually.
- In person is just better for networking and focusing on the material presented. Hybrid and virtual are better than none at all!
- In person is my preference but I think hybrid allows those with lack of staff, time or travel funds to attend. During high covid times, virtual is best.
- In-person works best for some of the topics (especially those that require participation), while virtual is great for others.
- It is easier to do and saves on gas.
- It is very difficult for understaffed libraries to attend in-person trainings, even though the content is relevant and needed. We can, however, find a way to attend virtually or at least watch the recordings.
- It would be useful if more training sessions were recorded and made available for CE hours (if technologically possible).
- More in-person when safe.
- More IT/technology troubleshooting training for library staff.

- Not everyone feels comfortable in person meetings.
- I mostly prefer virtual training.
- Virtual allows flexibility needed.
- Virtual opportunities have been a life-saver for libraries who are short-staffed. Thank you.
- Virtual saves time and extra staff coverage.
- Virtual training is the bottom option in most cases for our staff as that medium just doesn't have the impact, connection, and that in person does.
- We depend on the Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program to keep our technology programs up-to-date and running. Without this service we would be unable to provide the high level of service our citizens.

10. What additional services do you think the Tennessee State Library & Archives should provide to public libraries?

- Access to small town local newspapers
- Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Training
- Hotspots
- I am extremely grateful for the services provided by the TSLA and thank you for your support to public libraries. I have no suggestions for additional services at this time.
- I appreciate the state paying for read squared. I hope they continue to pay for this service.
- I don't know of anything that is not already provided.
- I think you do a great job. With all the resources that you provide.
- Just the support provided is wonderful! Thank you!
- Keep website re/design as part of grant. Include app re/design; Allow for tech pieces over 5K when part of larger project (like automation or self-checkout stations).
- More aimed towards a one-person library with no one else there to help in the library. I have to always figure out how to keep up with Facebook and deal with people that I am micromanage myself that it gets overwhelming.
- More library staff certification opportunities (e.g., access to Google Professional Certificates, etc.). This would allow rural/small access to credentials that we don't have, as MLS degrees are not always feasible or practical in jobs in or near rural areas.
- None come to mind, but when they do, I feel free to share with my fabulous Regional staff. I am so grateful for the expertise and support at my Regional office.
- State sponsored virtually programming that we could share with our communities.
- Training for new staff for patron interaction and scenarios. To teach them how to deal with different situations and patron attitudes that often arise in a library setting.
- Training on how to train others, especially on computers.
- We appreciate all that you do for us. It would be extremely helpful if some of the standards were mandated, rather than suggested, to help libraries get more funding for the things we really need in order to meet the needs of our communities.
- You all do a great job, going above and beyond, to help new librarians.

Appendix C: Regional Library Staff Survey Results

Please note: Percentages are rounded up so some total results may exceed 100 percent.

1. Please select the top five most important LSTA-funded programs and services for your member libraries. (Please check up to five programs and services.)

| | |
|--|----|
| 1) Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.) | 25 |
| 2) Technology Grants | 22 |
| 3) Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) | 21 |
| 4) Nationwide Interlibrary Loan (OCLC) | 20 |
| 5) ShareIt | 12 |
| 6) Library for Accessible Books and Media | 10 |
| 7) Materials for the Disadvantaged | 9 |
| 8) Continuing Education | 9 |
| 9) Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program | 0 |

2. How would you improve delivery of programs and services currently provided through LSTA?

- An annual (virtual) tech workshop provided by the NSC program staff for our librarians could be a good way to highlight their services and procedures.
- I think delivery is fine.
- I would do more marketing about the programs and services other than posting on the Listserv. There seems to be a lot that falls through the cracks there.
- More publicity for the public to know about them.
- PSAs on local radio and television stations. I am always amazed at how many people know nothing about TEL, READS, and Library for Accessible Books and Media.
- Support outreach efforts to community through grant opportunities for literacy programs and services and partnerships with social service organizations.

3. In your opinion, which one LSTA-funded program do you feel is the most under-utilized? You may check only one program.

| | |
|---|----|
| ▪ Nationwide Interlibrary Loan (OCLC) | 11 |
| ▪ Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) | 5 |
| ▪ Library for Accessible Books and Media | 5 |
| ▪ Materials for the Disadvantaged | 2 |
| ▪ Continuing Education | 2 |
| ▪ Network Services Consultants (NSC) Program | 1 |
| ▪ Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (R.E.A.D.S.) | 0 |
| ▪ ShareIt | 0 |
| ▪ Technology Grants | 0 |

4. What would you do to spotlight and promote the under-utilized LSTA-funded program you selected in Question 3?

- Advertise more
- Annual training webinar on how to use it
- Continue to offer reminders about the services, have outreach strategies the individual member libraries could use to target new users and connect them with services
- Educated public library staff members about this possibility.
- Encourage library directors to promote the service more than they are.
- Flyers or bookmarks to advertise it.
- Fun promotional materials and highlights in trainings

- Have a formalized TEL program to train the trainer for public and school libraries as was initiated when TEL first began with the expectation that the trained trainer would be responsible for continuously train and provide updates to library staff and school district employees on TEL.
- I have no suggestions at the moment
- I just re-read an old quote I had written down about LABM, something about it may not have high usage compared to the regular library collection, but for those who need it, it's a critical lifeline.
- I would have my libraries do more advertising of the program and also refer patrons that they know could use the program. I don't think that the libraries are doing that at this time and it needs to be a stronger focus.
- I would like for my libraries to be more aggressive in promoting ILL in general and OCLC in particular. I still see patrons walking away without either of these programs ever being mentioned by circulation staff, and this is a missed opportunity. In next year's training plan, I would love for us to try to find someone who could do an in-service on "selling" in your library. Proactively promoting and "selling" all of the services that are provided in each library instead of reactively offering them could have a positive impact on our overall customer service and patron experience.
- Improve advertisement statewide.
- It seems like this resources should be partially funded with money from the Department of Education to be utilized by K-12 students.
- It's hard because I know TEL is a one woman show. I think hiring an assistant or a team of people to help Andrea would be hugely beneficial. Soliciting public library feedback about why they feel they don't use TEL or show it to their patrons is something else I would do. We need to find out what the barriers are to it before focusing on spotlighting and promoting it.
- Make sure all library staff are aware of this service.
- Maybe advertise the service on materials (like bookmarks and magnets) distributed to patrons who currently use library lending services and posters promoting the service displayed at libraries.
- More advertising that this option is available for use.
- More outreach, social media posts, email and listserv reminders of what they have to offer
- More promotion at the local library level
- Need more of them
- Provide more information about the service and more routinely. Rather than just an email annually to remind.
- Regular reminders via email to library directors
- Social media and PSAs
- Statewide advertising campaigns for TV and radio
- The library staff I speak with are rarely knowledgeable when it comes to what TEL has to offer and how to utilize it effectively. I think bridging that gap will help with patron awareness.
- Trainings for library staff and teachers/school administrators

5. **What other additional programs or services should be included in LSTA?**

- A state bookmobile would reach rural areas currently underserved by public libraries.
- It would be cool to have something specific for boards. Whether it's their own copies of Robert's Rules or a training course – there is a need for development in how to run a meeting and how to act as a board. Civic engagement is one of IMLS' focal points. I'd love to see something about how the library is a civic space and appropriate for civic conversation and collaboration.

- More digital literacy focused grants for all ages and backgrounds including training and workshops offered in Spanish. Grants to assist libraries in providing ADA accommodations for patrons needing them.
- There are many group homes for mentally challenged adults. Some of them go to the library weekly. Activity programming for them would be great.
- Virtual training platforms for libraries who cannot afford them.

6. Please feel free to share any other thoughts you may have regarding LSTA-funded programs and services.

- All nine of the above-listed programs are extremely important to our libraries. It was hard to pick just five.
- I believe the programs funded for libraries in Tennessee represent some of the best use of my tax dollars anywhere.
- I feel these programs are very beneficial to the libraries and hope they will continue.
- I think the current LSTA funded programs and services are all money well spent.
- Life skills programming, such as laundry (separating colors and fabrics), planning meal menus, changing the oil, how to plant vegetables, simple home repairs, etc.
- Love the availability of LSTA funds to purchase hotspots and strengthen broadband and WIFI extension.
- So grateful to have this!
- Thank you for all you are doing to make LSTA programs and services available. It matters!
- The programs and services we have funded through LSTA are outstanding and very necessary. Thank you for doing this good work. I know it benefits our libraries more than they even know.
- These services are what help make our libraries great. We would not be very effective without TEL, READS, the NSC program, training, and technology grants.

Appendix D: TACL Survey Responses

Prior to the October 8, 2021 focus group session, members of the Tennessee Advisory Council for Libraries (TACL) ranked the nine LSTA-funded programs and services in order of importance to the libraries they represent on the council. TACL members ranked the programs and services from one to nine with one being the most important and nine being the least important...

- 1) Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL)
- 2) Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (READS)
- 3) Technology Grants
- 4) ShareIt
- 5) Nationwide Interlibrary Loan
- 6) Library for Accessible Books and Media (TIE)
- 7) Network Service Consultants (NSC) Program (TIE)
- 8) Continuing Education
- 9) Materials for the Disadvantaged

Appendix E: TSLA Program Managers' Survey Questions

Program managers provided responses to eight (8) open-ended questions with the expectation of anonymity. As such, their responses remain confidential. However, for the record, the following questions were asked in the survey...

- 1) What projects do you manage as part of TSLA's current five-year LSTA plan?
- 2) Based on your role and from your perspective, how are things progressing in implementing your project(s) in the current five-year LSTA plan?
- 3) Based on your experience in implementing the current five-year LSTA plan, what changes do you recommend to the next five-year plan, if any?
- 4) As you know, the current five-year LSTA plan has many reporting requirements and most evaluations are collected via surveys. As such, the current plan is criticized by some as "survey heavy." Do you have any recommendations on alternative evaluation methods?
- 5) Do you see any gaps in LSTA services? What are those gaps and what recommendations do you have for how these gaps may be bridged?
- 6) What other additional LSTA programs and services should be included in the new five-year LSTA plan?
- 7) Do you feel you understand your role within the LSTA five-year plan? Is there additional information you feel is needed to feel fully informed of how TSLA progresses in the plan as a whole during the five-year period?
- 8) Please share any other thoughts you may have.

Appendix F: Results of 2020 IT Infrastructure Survey

1. LibGuides are local webpages with information for staff, libraries, and trustees. Do you utilize LibGuides?

| | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 36 |
| No | 6 |

2. LibGuides meet my needs for intended purposes.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Agree | 18 |
| Strongly Agree | 17 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 1 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

3. LibGuides help improve library services to the public.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Agree | 18 |
| Strongly Agree | 14 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 4 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

4. Niche Academy is an online tool for creating and providing training. Do you utilize Niche Academy?

| | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 22 |
| No | 19 |

5. Niche Academy has been useful to me in meeting library needs.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 10 |
| Agree | 8 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 4 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

6. Niche Academy has been useful to me in meeting library needs.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 10 |
| Agree | 8 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 4 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

7. WebJunction provides online training for library workers. Do you utilize WebJunction?

| | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 37 |
| No | 7 |

8. Niche Academy has been useful to me in meeting library needs.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Agree | 17 |
| Strongly Agree | 12 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 1 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

9. Using WebJunction will help improve library services to the public.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Agree | 16 |
| Strongly Agree | 15 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 2 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

10. Counting Opinions is the company that provides Library Survey and Standards Survey and is a reference set for libraries to data. Do you utilize Counting Opinions?

| | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 26 |
| No | 14 |

11. I am satisfied that Counting Opinions is meeting library needs for data reporting and access.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 12 |
| Agree | 12 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 1 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

12. Using Counting Opinions helps improve library services to the public.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 15 |
| Agree | 10 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 0 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

13. Have you used equipment and/or software purchased through the ISP in 2020-2021? (Note: If you are using state desktops or laptops, it was probably purchased through the ISP.)

| | |
|-----|----|
| Yes | 38 |
| No | 0 |

14. Niche Academy has been useful to me in meeting library needs.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 24 |
| Agree | 12 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 1 |
| Disagree | 1 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |
| Somewhat Agree | 0 |

15. Please share any recommendations for hardware or software that would improve your ability to serve public libraries.

- An extra desktop computer of the type libraries purchase to have in the office to test software and updates prior to rolling them out the public library computers.
- Better equipment for doing hybrid training. I know IT is working on suggestions.
- Equipment to provide better hybrid and virtual trainings for libraries.
- Faster computers
- Flexible presentation hardware for video and audio that is portable and could be set up at any public library location to provide in-house training and incorporate virtual access.
- Get equipment that is more up-to-date. Computing resources are constantly improving so staying on a regular cadence of hardware updates will help serve our patrons more efficiently.
- New laptops that are made for everyday work and not just for training.
- We need a better survey software – current license is too limited.

Appendix G: LSTA 2020 Survey, Part 2

1. Cybervation is the company that provides Libraries by the Numbers for Tennessee. Do you utilize Libraries by the Numbers?

| | |
|-----|----|
| No | 26 |
| Yes | 19 |

2. Libraries by the Numbers meet my needs for intended topics

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 12 |
| Agree | 6 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 1 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

3. Libraries by the Numbers help improve library services to the public.

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Strongly Agree | 12 |
| Agree | 6 |
| Neither Agree or Disagree | 1 |
| Disagree | 0 |
| Strongly Disagree | 0 |

Appendix H: TACL Members

| Council Member | Representing |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Geoffrey Bent | <i>Stones River Region</i> |
| Bessie Davis | <i>Regional Libraries</i> |
| Dr. Amy Dietrich | <i>Hatchie River Region</i> |
| Charles Elmore | <i>Ocoee River Region</i> |
| Don Farmer | <i>Obion River Region</i> |
| Stuart Gaetjens | <i>TennShare</i> |
| Meredith Hardin | <i>School Libraries</i> |
| Mary Ann Jordan | <i>Red River Region</i> |
| Erika Long | <i>Tennessee Library Association</i> |
| Keenon McCloy | <i>Metropolitan Libraries</i> |
| Dennis Miller | <i>Falling Water River Region</i> |
| Polly Peterson | <i>Holston River Region</i> |
| Dr. Steven Smith | <i>Academic Libraries</i> |
| Paul Webb | <i>Buffalo River Region</i> |
| Nancy Williamson | <i>Clinch River Region</i> |

Appendix I: Focus Group Participants

December 9, 2021 Focus Group Session

| | |
|------------------|---|
| James Houston | <i>Director, Art Circle Public Library</i> |
| Kristin Tabor | <i>Deputy Director, Art Circle Public Library</i> |
| Patty Dalton | <i>Children's Librarian, Art Circle Public Library</i> |
| Savannah Gilbert | <i>Director, Chester County Public Library</i> |
| Brianna Stevens | <i>Acquisitions Librarian, Gils County Public Library</i> |
| David Phillips | <i>Director, Jefferson City Public Library System</i> |
| Lindsey Moore | <i>Director, Mumford County Public Library</i> |
| Dana Richardson | <i>Director, Macon County Public Library</i> |
| Norma Day | <i>Director, Rocky Top Public Library</i> |

December 10, 2021 Focus Group Session

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Martha Hendricks | <i>Director, Clarksville-Montgomery County Public Library</i> |
| Megan Lee | <i>Director, Hartsville/Trousdale County Public Library</i> |
| Lori Cox | <i>Director, Polk County Library</i> |
| Elizabeth Kozlowski | <i>Director, White House Public Library</i> |

Appendix J: TSLA Staff Interviewed

| Staff Member | Program or Role |
|--------------------------|---|
| Ashley Bowers | <i>Former Deputy State Librarian & Archivist</i> |
| Marion K. Bryant | <i>Regional eBook and Audiobook Download System (READS)</i> |
| Bessie Davis | <i>Materials for the Disadvantaged (MFD) & Inter-Library Loan (ILL)</i> |
| Christy Chandler | <i>Library by the Numbers / Counting Opinions</i> |
| Jennifer Cowan-Henderson | <i>LSTA Coordinator</i> |
| Chuck Sherrill | <i>State Librarian & Archivist</i> |
| Maria Sochor | <i>Library for Accessible Books and Media</i> |
| Lauri Thompson | <i>Continuing Education</i> |
| Andrea N. Zielke | <i>Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL)</i> |

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