Washington State Library
Library Services and Technology Act
Five-Year Evaluation Report
2018-2022

An independent evaluation of the use of Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) funding in Washington, prepared for the Washington State Library.

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SOS
Office of the Secretary of State
Washington State Library

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INSTITUTE of Museum and Library SERVICES

Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

The Washington State Library (WSL) Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan establishes Goals and priorities for the use of LSTA funding. In the spring of 2022, WSL evaluated the activities undertaken in its 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan. This evaluation examines effective past practices, the efficacy in implementing activities used to advance State Goals, and key findings and recommendations for use in organizing the 2023-2027 LSTA Five-Year Plan. In addition, the evaluation looks at the activities funded through the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) as authorized by the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The Mission of WSL is:

> **The State Library: Connecting Washington through the power of libraries.**
>
> *The Washington State Library builds prosperous and informed communities by providing technology, access to information, resources, and professional support.*

In addition to this Mission, the Goals outlined in WSL's 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan are as follows:

- **Goal 1: Promote economic growth, education, and life-long learning.** Contribute to the state's economic prosperity and cultural richness by supporting relevant and high-quality education, literacy and reading, and life-long learning.

- **Goal 2: Preserve and share Washington's stories.** Connect Washingtonians to their history, employing digital initiatives, and other preservation strategies to tell the stories of local communities and to celebrate our common heritage.

- **Goal 3. Serve all who cannot read standard print.** Expand the reach and effectiveness of the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) with innovative outreach initiatives to increase overall user population, establish and strengthen borrower relationships, and promote high-quality, accessible library, and information resources.

- **Goal 4. Support the incarcerated and hospitalized in their recovery and release.** Expand and enhance the provision of direct library and information services to incarcerated and hospitalized populations in support of education, literacy, recovery, and re-entry

- **Goal 5. Develop professional skills and build capacity among all libraries.** Elevate the quality of library service and caliber of library staff through statewide projects, facilitation, consulting, grants, training, and modeling best practices to build capacity in libraries statewide.

Key Findings of Retrospective Evaluation

The key findings of this evaluation are all supported by an analysis of LSTA-related program budgets during the 2018-2022 LSTA grant period. This analysis includes several exhibits which outline project costs, program budgets, the IMLS focal areas and intents, and goals and strategies used by WSL to make progress towards the Goals outlined above. An overall analysis of WSL Goals and funding allocations is shown in Exhibit 1 for the 2018-2022 LSTA grant period.

During the grant period, WSL allocated $11,071,669 towards five overall goals. During this period, WSL invested the most funding towards Goal 5. Develop professional skills and build capacity among all

libraries ($5,213,837) followed closely by Goal 4. Support the incarcerated and hospitalized in their recovery and release ($2,453,495) and Goal 2. Preserve and share Washington's stories ($1,287,078).

Exhibit 1 Washington State Library Budget by Goal (2018-2020)

Budget By Goals: 2018-2020	LSTA Funds	Total Project Cost
Goal 1. Promote economic growth, education, and life-long learning.	$923,289	$3,758,289
Goal 2. Preserve and share Washington's stories	$1,287,078	$1,287,078
Goal 3. Serve all who cannot read standard print	$1,193,970	$4,155,295
Goal 4. Support the incarcerated and hospitalized in their recovery and release	$2,453,495	$2,573,661
Goal 5. Develop professional skills and build capacity among all libraries	$5,213,837	$7,815,367
Grand Total	**$11,071,669**	**$19,589,690**

Note: The table above represents data from 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Source: State Program Report (SPR) Data.

Regarding the overall use of funding, WSL was able to leverage LSTA funds during the grant period to provide significant support toward Goals 4 and 5. In addition, for Goals 2 and 4, the use of LSTA funds accounts for nearly the total project cost. In total, the use of LSTA funds accounted for 57% of all project costs during the grant period.

Program Intent

Following IMLS's Measuring Success evaluation framework, LSTA activities conducted by WSL for 2018-2022 were categorized by framework intents. The analysis below (see **Exhibit 2**) shows the primary intents and associated LSTA and total budget allocations. WSL made significant investments through programs with the Intent to Improve user ability to obtain and/or use information resources, Improve user ability to use resources and information (employment), Improve user general knowledge and skills, and Improve the library's physical and technical infrastructure. For several of these intents, WSL leveraged LSTA funds to account for nearly all of the total project cost.

The programs with the Intent to Improve user ability to obtain and/or use information resources received the highest percentage of LSTA grant funding with 64% of funds being received from WSL. The second largest intent was Improve user general knowledge and skills with 16% of funds. The other intents that received a significant amount of LSTA funding were Improve the library physical and technical infrastructure with 12.6% of funds, Improve the Library Workforce with 4.4% of funding, and Improve user ability to use resources and information (employment) with 1.9% of funding.

Exhibit 2 Budget by Primary Intent (2018-2020)

Primary Intents	LSTA Budget (Sum)	Total Budget (Sum)	LSTA Funds (%)
Improve Library Operations	$91,683	$91,683	0.8%
Improve the Library Workforce	$495,978	$502,043	4.4%
Improve the library physical and technical infrastructure	$1,422,263	$1,422,263	12.6%
Improve user ability to discover information resources	$0	$0	0.0%
Improve user ability to obtain and/or use information resources	$7,233,067	$12,910,022	64.0%
Improve user formal education	$7,013	$7,013	0.1%
Improve user general knowledge and skills	$1,840,888	$1,840,888	16.3%
Improve user ability to apply information (personal, family, or household finances)	$0	$0	0.0%
Improve user ability to apply information (personal or family health and wellness)	$0	$0	0.0%
Improve user ability to apply information (parenting and family skills)	$1,973	$1,973	0.0%
Improve user ability to use resources and information (employment)	$210,387	$3,045,387	1.9%
Improve user ability to use and apply business resources	$0	$0	0.0%
Improve user ability to participate in their community	$0	$0	0.0%
Improve user ability to converse in community conversations	$0	$0	0.0%
Grand Total	**$11,303,252**	**$19,821,272**	**100%**

Note: The total budget is higher here due to projects being under two Intents. The difference amounts to $231,582.

Source: State Program Report (SPR) Data.

Several Intents received no funding in the previous period including Improve user ability to discover information resources, Improve user ability to apply information (personal, family, or household finances), Improve user ability to apply information (personal or family health and wellness), Improve user ability to use and apply business resources, Improve user ability to participate in their community, and Improve user ability to converse in community conversations. These Intents are discussed throughout the evaluation report.

Goal 1: Promote Economic Growth, Education, and Life-Long Learning

WSL programs contributed to increased access to library resources for Washington residents in all areas of the state. This Goal primarily reflects the following congressional priorities identified in the IMLS Grants to States Program:

> *Expanding 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.*

In addition, this Goal aligns with the IMLS Focal Areas of Life-long Learning, Economic and Employment Development, and helps WSL meet Washington's stated needs of world-class education, prosperous economy, and healthy and safe communities. Two programs serving this Goal were evaluated, both of which specifically promote equity for those who need assistance with digital and career objectives.

Program Highlights

- **Digital Literacy.** For Digital Literacy, the Microsoft Imagine Academy provides technology skills training. Thirty-five libraries across Washington provide onsite Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) testing and certification, and about 400 libraries have made the program available through their websites.

- **Workforce Development.** For Workforce Development, the purpose is to partner with local libraries, academic institutions, and workforce development entities to bring resources to this service area.

Recommendations

Goal 1 was partly achieved by WSL. To improve achievement towards Goal 1 the following recommendations are suggested for WSL:

- **Digital Literacy.** Prioritize Digital Literacy investments to support life success in an increasingly online world and to best leverage state and federal broadband resources.

- **Resource Promotion.** With the relatively recent availability of LinkedIn, Northstar, and other employment resources, additional promotion is needed to ensure they are well adopted and fully used.

Funding for Goal 1 accounted for $923,289 or 8.3% of the total funding. This funding was allocated to activities that were designed around the Focal Areas of Economic and Employment Development, Information Access, and Lifelong Learning.

Goal 2: Preserve and Share Washington's Stories

WSL dedicated programs to connect Washingtonians to their history through digital initiatives and preservation strategies. WSL supported libraries in telling stories of local communities and celebrating a common heritage. This Goal reflects congressional priorities identified in the IMLS Grants to States Program:

Support exemplary stewardship of library collections and promote the use of technology to facilitate discovery of knowledge and cultural heritage.

In addition, this Goal aligns with the IMLS Focal Area of Life-long Learning and Information Access and helps WSL meet Washington's stated need to build partnerships between local libraries and their communities, with the Washington State Library. Two programs serving Goal 2 were evaluated.

Program Highlights

▪ **Digitization Projects.** WSL has successfully preserved Washington's history through its Digitization programs, including the Washington Digital Newspapers (WDN) and Washington Rural Heritage (WRH). In 2020, WSL, partnering with the State Library of Oregon and the Oregon Historical Society, established a Northwest Hub for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA). This hub transforms metadata from important digital collections around the northwest and makes them available to the world through DPLA.

▪ **Creating, Curating, and Utilizing Open Data.** In 2019, WSL piloted a program identifying open data sets that libraries could use for many purposes including reference, assessment, and collections. There is now a dedicated consultant that spends half of her time (funded by LSTA) consulting with libraries about open data. (The other half of her time is state-funded working with the Office of the CIO working on state data projects.)

Recommendation

Goal 2 was achieved by WSL. To strengthen efforts for Goal 2, the following recommendation is suggested for WSL:

▪ **Design digitization resources suitable for Tribal needs.** Respect Tribal concerns regarding public access to digitized resources, either clarifying that access on existing platforms can be controlled to restrict non-Tribal access or supporting a platform that allows this functionality.

Funding for Goal 2 accounted for $1,287,078 or 11.6% of the total funding. This funding was allocated to activities that were designed around the Focal Areas of Lifelong Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Capacity.

Goal 3: Serve All Who Cannot Read Standard Print

This Goal reflects the following congressional priorities identified in the IMLS Grants to States Program:

Prepare people to be full participants in their local communities and our global society by placing the learner at the center and supporting engaging experiences in libraries.

In addition, this Goal aligns with the IMLS Focal Areas of Life-long Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Capacity and helps WSL meet Washington's stated need to provide direct services to those unable to read standard print materials. One program serving Goal 3 was evaluated.

Program Highlights

▪ **Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL).** WTBBL provides services to residents who are blind, visually impaired, or have other physical or reading disabilities, including readers' advisory in person, over the phone, and through an online recommendation system, and 100 volunteers who

provide 3,000 hours of service annually. WTBBL circulates over 427,000 items annually, of which approximately 98% are audio books and patrons download over 145,000 items. Nearly 94% of patrons surveyed consider WTBBL services to be "above average" or "excellent."

Recommendation

Goal 3 was achieved by WSL. To strengthen efforts for Goal 3, the following recommendation is suggested for WSL:

- **Washington Talking Book & Braille Library.** Continue to support and promote the WTBBL which provides essential services to residents who are blind, visually impaired, or have other physical or reading disabilities.

Funding for Goal 3 accounted for $1,193,970 or 10.8% of the total funding. This funding was allocated to activities that were designed around the Focal Areas of Information Access, Lifelong Learning, and Human Services.

Goal 4: Support the Incarcerated and Hospitalized in their Recovery and Release

This Goal reflects the following congressional priorities identified in the IMLS Grants to States Program:

> *Prepare people to be full participants in their local communities and our global society by placing the learner at the center and supporting engaging experiences in libraries.*

In addition, this Goal aligns with the IMLS Focal Areas of Life-long Learning, and Information Access, and helps WSL meet Washington's stated need to have healthy and safe communities by providing direct services to residents of these facilities and building partnerships between the Department of Corrections (DOC), Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS), local libraries, and their communities. One program serving Goal 4 was evaluated.

Program Highlights

- **Institutional Libraries.** WSL supports institutional libraries in 10 of Washington's 12 correctional facilities and 2 state psychiatric hospitals. In June 2020, Washington correctional facilities had a total inmate population of 15,829. In 2019, the libraries received an estimated 312,000 visits from inmates and patients. DOC library staff circulated approximately 450,268 collection items and responded to nearly 913,380 reference questions. These libraries provide information services and access to educational, recreational, and recovery materials to incarcerated individuals and patients.

Recommendation

Goal 4 was achieved by WSL. To strengthen efforts for Goal 4, the following recommendation is suggested for WSL:

- **Institutional Libraries Program.** Work with the Secretary of State legislative team and representatives to appropriate State funding to restore ILS staffing levels to pre-Great recession levels.

Funding for Goal 4 accounted for $2,453,495 or 22.2% of the total funding. This funding was allocated to activities that were designed around the Focal Areas of Information Access, Lifelong Learning, Economic and Employment Development, and Human Services.

Goal 5: Develop Professional Skills and Build Capacity Among All Libraries

This Goal reflects the following congressional priorities identified in the IMLS Grants to States Program:

> *Maximize the value of the library for the American public through excellence in public management, strategic alignment of resources, and prioritization of programmatic activities.*

In addition, this Goal aligns with the IMLS Focal Area of Institutional Capacity and helps WSL meet Washington's stated need to build capacity to enhance library service to the local community and develop partnerships between local libraries and their communities. Six programs serving Goal 5 are highlighted below.

Program Highlights

- **Consulting Services.** WSL's consulting services include: Statewide Assistance to Libraries, Technology Services for Libraries, and Youth Services. The Statewide Assistance to Libraries program disseminates information, helps libraries apply for E-Rate, provides technical assistance setting up hardware and software, and provides training. Technology Services for Libraries assists libraries with setting up hardware and software, implementing online library catalogs, building, and maintaining websites, and improving network capacity. Youth Services provided the Collaborative Summer Library Program, youth STE(A)M programming, and offered libraries circulating collections of LEGOs, programmable robotics to teach coding, and other builder kits.

- **Continuing Education.** In the area of Continuing Education, during 2018-20, WSL provided 111 training sessions, with topics developed according to a needs assessment and strategic decisions based on its expertise. A total of 165 library staff attended professional conferences, either in person or, online during the COVID-19 pandemic. In late 2017, WSL began the First Tuesdays monthly online training sessions (https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/firsttuesdays/), which are available to all librarians and staff. During the pandemic, attendance at First Tuesday's sessions increased dramatically. Notable continuing education programs included: training children's librarians and managers in research-based story time, Connecting the Dots, an online orientation called Supercharged Storytime, LEAP into Science, NASA @ My Library, and All Aboard for Kindergarten. In 2019, WSL began to subscribe to the Niche Academy, a platform for hosting video content. During the COVID-19 epidemic being able to provide continuing education via online conferencing software, such as Zoom, MS Teams, and WebEx became invaluable. Having a central location where librarians could access the content at their convenience increased both number of people who accessed the trainings as well as the geographical reach.

- **Teacher Librarian Common Core Cadre (TLC3).** This program helps teacher-librarians support teachers in implementing Common Core Standards in the state's K-12 education. By creating library resources and training in the English Language Arts, the program has helped support teachers during a major shift in the K-12 curriculum. WSL helped leverage the shift in K-12 curricula to make school libraries and teacher-librarians more visible.

- **Assessment in Action.** The Community and Technical College (CTC) Libraries engaged in a three-year project to study and report on the use of modern assessment techniques in two-year college libraries. One outcome was a chapter entitled "Building Librarian Assessment Confidence through Communities of Research Practice" in the forthcoming book *The Community College Library: Assessment* which was slated to be published in early March 2022 by ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries).

- **Electronic Resources.** WSL develops Electronic Resources through the Statewide Database Licensing (SDL) and Downloadable eBooks & Audiobook programs. SDL reaches more libraries than any other LSTA-related project. The Washington Anytime Library, a consortium of 45 public libraries, provides access to eBooks and downloadable audiobooks through OverDrive, and serves a combined population of 785,000. In 2020, the SDL program conducted an RFP for journal/newspaper and youth content, and after 20 years of ProQuest being offered statewide, GALE won the RFP. Current participants in the program around the state include: 55 public libraries/systems; 22 community and technical colleges; all 9 Educational Service Districts; 6 special libraries; and 2 Tribes.

- **SimplyE/Palace Project.** In 2019, WSL conducted an RFP for a contractor to implement and host the SimplyE ebook app for any library in the state that was interested in participating. Using LSTA funds WSL would then underwrite the implementation and hosting costs for a library for 3 years. The chosen contractor was LYRASIS. The SimplyE app is grant-funded and developed by the New York Public Library (NYPL). The app allows for aggregation of ebooks in a single app that the library can personalize. Seven beta libraries in the state were set up with SimplyE in 2020: Anacortes Asotin, Bellingham , Everett, Kalama, Walla Walla Rural, and Whatcom County. In 2021, the Knight Foundation granted the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and LYRASIS $5 million to take the SimplyE open-source code and create a solid product that can be scaled up and taken to the next level.

Recommendations

Goal 5 was partly achieved by WSL. To strengthen efforts for Goal 5, the following recommendations are suggested for WSL:

- **Awareness Raising and Technical Assistance.** Increase WSL staff and resources dedicated to raising awareness of funding opportunities and providing technical assistance, including planning for long-term sustainability, project implementation, and hands-on mentoring for less resourced libraries. Consider options to organize promotions and technical support through channels and staff dedicated to serving targeted library types.

- **Consortial Purchasing.** Increase efforts to leverage collective library expertise in vetting potential products and services, seeking to include the negotiating and purchasing power of more libraries in consortial purchasing efforts.

- **SimpleE/Palace.** Expand collaboration with other state library agencies and organizations like the Urban Library Council and the State Libraries of California, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, as well as the Canadian Urban Library Council (CULC) for broader expansion and adoption of this platform. Widespread adoption and purchasing power are necessary for continued success.

Funding for Goal 5 accounted for $5,213,837 or 47.1% of the total funding. This funding was allocated to activities that were designed around the Focal Areas of Information Access, Lifelong Learning, Economic and Employment Development, and Human Services.

Overarching Recommendations

In addition to the Goal-specific recommendations listed above, this evaluation of the 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan makes the following overarching recommendations for consideration in the development of the 2023-2027 Five Year Plan.

Recommendation: Goals and Equity/Inclusion. Retain the existing five Goals established in the 2018-2022 plan which work well to structure WSL's efforts. Apply a robust equity and inclusion lens when updating programmatic priorities to ensure resources are targeted effectively at supporting rural and urban underserved communities.

Recommendation: All Libraries. Find something for all libraries, leveraging large libraries' expertise and commitment to the success of all Washington libraries. Many of the programs funded by LSTA resources are beneficial for smaller and relatively less-resourced libraries. Goal-specific recommendations contained in this evaluation seek to enhance potential benefits for smaller libraries by providing additional resources for awareness and technical assistance. While larger libraries may benefit less from such resources, they can benefit significantly from, and be valuable participants in, a well-organized statewide consortial purchasing effort as noted under Goal 5.

Recommendation: Facilities and Technology, as well as Collections. Contemporary library services are delivered as much through high functioning facilities and technology as through high quality collections. Stakeholder interview participants encouraged the WSL to organize resources, staff expertise, and capacity around all three topics, treating facilities and technology with the same importance as collections. Technology was particularly emphasized given its increasing importance as a gateway to additional resources, both for library staff and community members. Related sub-recommendations include:

- **Increase advocacy** among state government, including the Secretary of State Office, the Department of Enterprise Services, the Department of Commerce and the Broadband Office, the legislature, and others to emphasize the importance of digital access as well as and sometimes in tension with cybersecurity.

- **Prioritize funding opportunities that facilitate digital access and digital literacy** for Washington state residents, particularly among populations that have limited access to resources. To ensure access to broadband and digital literacy skills specifically address underserved communities, expand collaboration with community-based organizations embedded in underserved communities in both rural and urban areas.

Overview of Evaluation Methods

The Washington State Library (WSL) engaged BERK Consulting to conduct the independent Five-Year Evaluation. BERK is an interdisciplinary consultancy integrating strategy, planning, and policy development; financial and economic analysis; and facilitation, design, and communications. Founded in 1988, BERK conducts program and process evaluations for public agencies, funders, and non-profit organizations at all stages of their program development.

The evaluation methods for the 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan included a review of WSL's annual reports to IMLS for the 2018 to 2022 period, as well as surveys and administrative data for the same period. These inputs were coupled with conversations with staff, and engagement with the Library Council of Washington (LCW) as well as interviews with librarians across the state. Detailed descriptions of the evaluation activities are outlined below.

Review of Annual Reports

An evaluation of the LSTA Plan 2018-2022 includes review of Annual Reports during that time. BERK reviewed State Program Report (SPR) data over the four years with a focus on projects, activities, and Intents per the SPR system structure. This review also considered what was planned and what happened within the COVID-19 pandemic.

Discussion Groups (Peer Libraries and Library Leaders)

BERK led five discussion groups in place of individual interviews. The discussion groups are outlined below, with Library Council members participating within the groups:

1. Large libraries

    - Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries
    - King County Library System
    - Pierce County Library System
    - Seattle Public Library
    - Sno-Isle Library System
    - Spokane Public Library

2. Smaller libraries from relatively more affluent communities, eastern and western Washington
3. Smaller libraries from relatively less affluent communities, eastern and western Washington
4. Academic libraries (including University of Washington, Washington State University, etc.)
5. Tribal libraries (with select individuals rather than a full Tribal group)

Survey (for Non-Discussion Group Participants)

A brief survey was conducted to reach peer libraries and librarians who do not participate in the discussion groups. The primary survey objectives were:

- Learning about what investments were made, benefits provided, and effective practices
- Gaining insight into how funding has been leveraged and if programs have been established

Introduction

This report evaluates the progress made by the Washington State Library (WSL) in achieving the Goals set in its 2018-2012 LSTA Five-Year Plan in terms of the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences (IMLS) Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents.[1] The Measuring Success framework helps IMLS aggregate the results of the LSTA program and communicate cumulative impact and makes it easier for State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs) to reflect on and adjust programs to meet the needs of libraries in their states.

This evaluation covers progress made on the five Goals outlined in WSL's 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan are as follows:

- **Goal 1: Promote economic growth, education, and life-long learning.** Contribute to the state's economic prosperity and cultural richness by supporting relevant and high-quality education, literacy and reading, and life-long learning.

- **Goal 2: Preserve and share Washington's stories.** Connect Washingtonians to their history, employing digital initiatives, and other preservation strategies to tell the stories of local communities and to celebrate our common heritage.

- **Goal 3. Serve all who cannot read standard print.** Expand the reach and effectiveness of the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) with innovative outreach initiatives to increase overall user population, establish and strengthen borrower relationships, and promote high quality, accessible library, and information resources.

- **Goal 4. Support the incarcerated and hospitalized in their recovery and release.** Expand and enhance the provision of direct library and information services to incarcerated and hospitalized populations in support of education, literacy, recovery, and re-entry

- **Goal 5. Develop professional skills and build capacity among all libraries.** Elevate the quality of library service and caliber of library staff through statewide projects, facilitation, consulting, grants, training, and modeling best practices to build capacity in libraries statewide.

This evaluation seeks to answer three sets of questions, *Retrospective*, *Process*, and *Methodology* and is structured accordingly. The first section addresses the *Retrospective Questions,* including what progress was made towards each Goal and to what extent the Five-Year plan activities achieved results that address national priorities.

The second section discusses *Process Questions*, including how WSL uses data to guide decision making regarding LSTA funded activities and how they provide information to key stakeholders to shape their Goals and strategies. It also discusses any changes made to the LSTA Five-Year Plan during its implementation.

The concluding section discusses the *Methodology Questions*, covering selection of the evaluator, methods

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[1] IMLS. Measuring Success Initiative in the Grants to States Program. Retrieved from: https://www.imls.gov/research-evaluation/program-evaluation/grants-state-library-agency/measuring-success-initiative

employed, stakeholder engagement in the evaluation process, and sharing of results.

The evaluation report results are linked to the IMLS Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents and targeted populations. For each Goal, the report provides highlights of substantial efforts, analysis of available data and data collected for the purpose of this evaluation. It discusses factors that may have inhibited greater progress toward meeting the Goals and recommendations for strengthening LSTA programs in the future.

Retrospective Questions

Retrospective Overview

This section of the evaluation assesses to what extent the WSL LSTA Five-Year Plan made progress towards each Goal, what results were achieved while Measuring Success Focal Areas and their corresponding Intents, and which population groups were a substantial focus of Five-Year Plan activities.

The Goals, Strategies, and Focus Areas contained in the 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan were based on the results and recommendations from the 2013-2017 LSTA five-year evaluation, information from the IMLS Five-Year Strategic Plan 2012-2016, the Washington Library Trainers (WALT)/Washing State Library CE Needs Assessment, Survey reports, Electronic Resources for Library Staff and Library Users, A report based on input from Youth Services Librarians, and Census and other demographic data.[2] WSL's LSTA-funded programs also are informed by statewide trends and priorities in the state.

Exhibit 3 shows the types of libraries able to receive support from WSL, the total LSTA funding allocated during the grant cycle, the total project costs (inclusive of matching funds), and the percent of total budget and count of activities.

Exhibit 3 LSTA Expenditure by Recipient Type (2018-2020)

Recipient Type	LSTA Funds	Total Project Cost	LSTA Budget %	Activities Count
State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA)	$10,991,903	$19,509,924	99.3%	113
Public	$35,646	$35,646	0.3%	2
Academic	$44,120	$44,120	0.4%	4
School	$0	$0	0.0%	0
Special	$0	$0	0.0%	0
	$11,071,669	**$19,589,690**	**100%**	**119**

Note: Funding to SLAA also includes salary and benefits for program managers and staff.

Source: State Program Report (SPR) Data.

The 2018-2022 grant cycle included 119 projects and $19.5 million in funding. The amount of LSTA Grants to States Program funding accounted for $11 million (56%) of budgeted expenditures. Of total LSTA funds, SLAA accounted for $10.9 million (99.3%) of LSTA-related funding and supported 113 activities.

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[2] Washington State Library (WSL) Plan MISSION & PURPOSE (wa.gov)

This percentage of funding is consistent with the 2013-2017 grant cycle. However, this was not direct funding for the WSL. Instead, WSL provided direct services in the form of consulting, training, and other support to the Washington library community and maintenance for WSL's institutional libraries and WTBBL.

WSL also used LSTA funds to support public and academic libraries. These libraries each accounted for less than 1% of LSTA funding at (0.3%) and (0.4%) respectively. This funding went to public libraries for various projects and trainings, with small grants for various seed projects and equipment purchases. In addition, the State maintenance of effort over the last five years surpassed 44%, well above the 33% threshold expected by IMLS.

Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents

The IMLS Measuring Success initiative was launched in 2011 to help SLAA and IMLS plan for, manage, and evaluate the LSTA Grants to States program.[3] This initiative consists of six focal areas and 14 corresponding intents, which standardize goals and strategies, commonly targeted by SLAAs. The structure in this initiative informs data collection strategies and data analysis for the LSTA program reports by defining three levels of analysis: SLAA actions, project/point of service, and end user/beneficiary. In the 2018-2022 grant cycle, WSL leveraged LSTA funds to support eight intents across five focal areas as outlined in **Exhibit 4.**

Exhibit 4 Focus Areas and Intents for Measure

Focal Areas	Intents
Information Access	▪ Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources.
Institutional Capacity	▪ Improve library operations. ▪ Improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure. ▪ Improve the library workforce.
Economic & Employment Development	▪ Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support.
Lifelong Learning	▪ Improve users' formal education. ▪ Improve users' general knowledge and skills
Human Services	▪ Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills.

Source: IMLS.

To the extent possible, this evaluation applies the Measuring Success Focal Areas in discussing the goals, strategies, and activities of WSL's 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year plan. The analysis and findings presented in

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[3] IMLS. Measuring Success Initiative in the Grants to States Program. Retrieved from: https://www.imls.gov/research-evaluation/program-evaluation/grants-state-library-agency/measuring-success-initiative

the evaluation also align with the IMLS levels of analysis. WSL supported 119 activities in the 2018-2022 grant cycle, all of which encompassed the IMLS activity types of instructional, content development, planning and evaluation, and procurement activities. In addition to a summary of activities and focal areas and intents, data collected for this assessment provides insight into funding allocated by focal area and intent.

Exhibit 5 highlights the share of funding allocated by Focal Area and Intent. This table also shows the percent of total activities during the 2018-2022 grant cycle. Nearly two-thirds (65%) of LSTA-related budgets from 2018-2022 went towards the Information Access Focal Area and the associated Intent of improving users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources. In addition, nearly half (45.6%) of activities during the 2018-2022 grant cycle were associated with the Focal Area of Information Access and Intent of Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources. During the 2018-2022 cycle no funding was allocated to the Focal Area of Civic Engagement. The Intents associated with this Focal Area were discussed above in the Executive Summary.

Exhibit 5 Budget by Primary Focal Areas and Intents (2018-2020)

Primary Focal Areas and Intents	Total Budget %	Total Activities %
Information Access	**65.13%**	**45.60%**
Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources.	65.13%	45.60%
Institutional Capacity	**10.17%**	**21.60%**
Improve library operations.	0.46%	0.80%
Improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure.	7.18%	8.00%
Improve the library workforce.	2.53%	12.80%
Economic & Employment Development	**15.36%**	**4.80%**
Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support.	15.36%	4.80%
Lifelong Learning	**9.32%**	**27.20%**
Improve users' formal education.	0.04%	0.80%
Improve users' general knowledge and skills.	9.29%	26.40%
Human Services	**0.0%**	**0.8%**
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills.	0.01%	0.80%

Note: Two projects are listed under more than one intent.

Source: State Program Report (SPR) Data

Consistent with WSL's goals (specifically Goal 1. Promote economic growth, education, and life-long learning) the Focal Area of Economic and Employment Development received 15% of funding with almost 5% of activities. In support of Washington's library workforce, WSL directed about 2.5% of LSTA funding in the grant cycle, went towards Institutional Capacity to support Washington Libraries, and almost a quarter (21%) of WSL's activities were aimed at improving the institutional capacity of libraries. Other Focal Areas that received funding included Lifelong Learning at 9% with about 27% of activities and Human Services which received less than (1%) of funding and activities.

In addition to the WSL priority populations, the IMLS five-year evaluation guidelines require a discussion of population groups which received a substantial focus of the LSTA funded activities. A *substantial focus* is defined as receiving at least 10% of the total LSTA grant funding. **Exhibit 6** shows the populations WSL served and what percentage of LSTA funding was targeted towards these population groups.

Exhibit 6 LSTA and State Resources Targeted to Specific Populations (2018-2020)

Population Groups	Substantial Focus	LSTA Funds %
Individuals with disabilities	**Yes**	**33%**
School-aged youth (aged 6-17)	**Yes**	**15%**
Young adults (aged 18-25)	**Yes**	**44%**
Adults (aged 26-49)	**Yes**	**44%**
Adults (aged 50-59)	**Yes**	**44%**
Adults (aged 60-69)	**Yes**	**44%**
Adults (aged 70 and older)	**Yes**	**43%**
Participants of all ages	**Yes**	**39%**
Children (aged 0-5)	No	3%
Individuals that are underemployed/unemployed people	No	0%
Individuals experiencing poverty	No	0%
Immigrants and/or refugees	No	1%
Families	No	9%
Intergenerational	No	1%
Individuals with limited literacy skills	No	3%

Note: LSTA fund percentages are partially inflated with some projects listed more than once across population groups.

Source: State Program Report (SPR) Data.

Based on the State Program Report (SPR) data, during the evaluation period eight groups reached the threshold of substantial focus. These groups include individuals with disabilities and population groups across all ages from school-aged children to older adults.

It is also worth noting that WSL directed funding towards seven population groups that did not meet the threshold of substantial focus. These population groups included immigrant and/or refugees, families, intergenerational populations, individuals with limited literacy skills, and children aged 0-5. These population groups received between 1-9% of funding except for individuals that are underemployed/unemployed and experiencing poverty. In addition, Improving the Library Workforce (as seen in Exhibit 2 – Budget by Primary Intent) did not surpass the threshold for substantial focus, coming in at 4.4% of the 3-year LSTA budget.

The groups with a substantial focus were reached through several WSL programs. These groups were reached through a combination of the **Center for the Book, Letters About Literature, One Community One Book**, the **Washington Rural Heritage** (WRH), the **Washington Talking Book & Braille Library** (WTBBL), **K-12 Teacher-Librarian** and **Youth Services** programs and projects. These programs and projects are discussed further in the next section below.

WSL priorities include extending service to underserved populations who would otherwise lack access to information and resources that can help them live better lives. Among those populations, WSL prioritizes:

- **Services to libraries in rural Washington** lacking adequate funding to update library technology and digital literacy education to support residents' participation in online life;

- **Library services for the blind and others with disabilities** that are barriers to reading traditional print formats;

- Access to homework help, databases, and other electronic resources for **students in underfunded school districts and adults pursuing education** to improve their self-sufficiency;

- Library services for people in **Washington state correctional institutions and psychiatric hospitals** whose well-being and reintegration into society can be aided by library resources; and

- Continuing education for **library staff in low-income areas** of the state where wages are inadequate to attract employees with formal library science education and the technical skills necessary for work in modern libraries.

WSL 2018-2022 Goals

Understanding the progress made towards each Goal is related to the funding allocated in the 2018-2022 grant cycle, the activities completed or supported by WSL, and the Focal Areas and Intents reached. In total, WSL used $11 million in LSTA funds over the three-year period analyzed as shown in **Exhibit 7**. WSL's 2018-2022 features five Goals compared to the previous 2013-2017 Five-Year Plan which only featured two Goals.

The investment in WSL Goals varied during the grant period with the highest investment being made towards Goal 5 (Develop professional skills and build capacity among all libraries). From 2018-2022, WSL used $5.2 million (see **Exhibit 7**) of total available funding to provide support for professional skills and capacity for all libraries in the state. The investment in Goal 5 of LSTA funds also covered 67% of the

total project cost for Goal 5. The second highest funded goal with $2.4 million allocated was Goal 4 (Support the incarcerated and hospitalized in their recovery and release).

Exhibit 7 Washington State Library Budget by Goal (2018-2020)

Budget By Goals: 2018-2020	LSTA Funds	Total Project Cost	Funding %
Goal 1. Promote economic growth, education, and life-long learning	$923,289	$3,758,289	25%
Goal 2. Preserve and share Washington's stories	$1,287,078	$1,287,078	100%
Goal 3. Serve all who cannot read standard print	$1,193,970	$4,155,295	29%
Goal 4. Support the incarcerated and hospitalized in their recovery and release	$2,453,495	$2,573,661	95%
Goal 5. Develop professional skills and build capacity among all libraries	$5,213,837	$7,815,367	67%
Grand Total	**$11,071,669**	**$19,589,690**	57%

Source: State Program Report (SPR) Data

Two WSL goals, Goal 2 (Preserve and share Washington's stories) and Goal 3 (Serve all who cannot read standard print) received nearly identical amounts of funding at $1.2 million and $1.1 million respectively (see **Exhibit 7**). The goal that received the least amount of funding is Goal 1 (Promote economic growth, education, and life-long learning). Of the funding allocated during this cycle, LSTA was leveraged to cover the nearly all or all of the funding for Goal 4, Goal 5 and Goal and partially cover the total project costs for Goal 1 and Goal 3.

Goal 1: Promote Economic Growth, Education, and Life-Long Learning

WSL's purpose in this area is to contribute to the state's economic prosperity and cultural richness by supporting relevant and high-quality education, literacy and reading, and life-long learning. This Goal reflects WSL's recognition that libraries have a role to play in helping residents increase their awareness and participation in literacy and digital literacy programs. This Goal is also aligned with the Governor's state priority issues to provide world-class education, support a prosperous economy, and ensure healthy and safe communities.

The total project cost for activities across the grant cycle under Goal 1 (inclusive of matching funds) was about $3.7 million. Of this amount, $923,289 or 25% were provided by LSTA funds. The remaining budget was provided by State Library maintenance of effort matching funds. In addition, LSTA funding for this goal represented 8% of the total LSTA funds allocated.

Exhibit 8 Goal 1 Strategies and Activities from LSTA Five-year Plan

Strategies	Activities
1.1. Coordinate with libraries, Workforce Development, and organizations that support underserved and marginalized individuals to support adult basic education, non-traditional learning, life-skills training, and digital literacy for academic and job readiness. 1.2. Work with the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) and the Department of Corrections (DOC) to improve employability of inmates in preparation for their release by improving their digital literacy skills. 1.3. Improve employability prospects for the recently released by supporting them to become Microsoft Office Specialist (MOS) certified in one or more Microsoft Office applications.	▪ The **Workforce Development** project is actively working with local libraries, academic institutions, and workforce development entities to bring resources to this service area. ▪ **Digital Literacy** supports libraries' ability to offer digital literacy activities and increase overall digital literacy in their communities by offering staff development workshops, sub-grants, and exposure to a variety of new technology devices.
1.4. Partner with educational institutions, libraries, and other organizations on initiatives and programming to promote reading, literacy, and literature, especially utilizing local authors and timely, relevant topics.	▪ **The Center for the Book** program promotes literacy and a love of books, reading, and libraries by shining a spotlight on the contribution of reading and libraries in strengthening communities. The portion of this program which is state funded will be included as part of WSL's match and MOE. ▪ The **Letters about Literature** program is a reading and writing contest for students in grades 4-12. Students are asked to read a book, poem, or speech and write to the author (living or dead) about how the book affected them personally. The portion of this program which is state funded will be included as part of WSL's match and MOE. ▪ **One Community One Book** programs and grants are designed to bring communities together to engage with ideas that grow from a shared reading experience.

Source: Washington State Library (WSL) LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018-2022.

In the LSTA five-year plan, WSL incorporated strategies and activities in service of Goal 1 and the Focal Areas. Some of the programs involved more than one activity and so served multiple primary Focal Areas. The specific strategies and activities are summarized above in **Exhibit 8.**

Regarding the IMLS Focal Areas and Intents, Goal 1 is connected to Economic and Employment Development, Information Access, and Lifelong Learning. Of the 2018-2022 LSTA funds, about 90% was allocated for activities related to these Focal Areas. In addition, most of the funding for this goal in the grant cycle was provided by matching funds.

For the purposes of evaluating WSL's progress towards these Goals and retaining consistency with WSL's SPR reports, the categorization of Goals and Measuring Success Focal Areas was maintained as reported. In total, two programmatic areas were reported as serving Goal 1. In this section, the two Goal 1 programmatic areas allocated the greatest percent of funds will be reviewed: Digital Literacy and Workforce Development.

Program: Digital Literacy

Program Effectiveness: Partly Achieved

In the 2017-19 state biannual budget WSL was allocated $841,000/year to continue the Microsoft IT Academy program that was begun in the previous biennium as well as to administer a statewide contract for Lynda.com, which has recently been acquired by LinkedIn. Lynda.com is an online learning platform for skill-based training to support workforce development. In this period, the name was changed to LinkedIn Learning. In the subsequent 2019-21 biannual budget, the allocation for Microsoft Academy and LinkedIn Learning was increased to $945,000/year. These state funds also pay for 60% of the salary and benefits for the Workforce Development consultant. In addition, state funds are being used to pay for a statewide license to the Northstar Digital Training and Assessment tool.

Of the $4,786,830 spent on Workforce Development over this five-year span, 93.4% came from state funding, and the remaining 6.6% came from LSTA funding. The LSTA portion of the funding has been used to support workforce development and digital literacy across the state, as well as for grants for libraries in support of developing and delivering various Digital Literacy programs.

This program is deemed to be partly successful because while resources have been purchased and made available, they have not been adopted as much as desired. Additional promotion is needed to raise awareness of the availability of these resources.

Stakeholder Input: Digital Literacy facilitates access to critical resources. Multiple discussion groups emphasized that comfort with digital resources is increasingly essential to academic success, lifelong learning, career development, and many other critical life functions. While this is a long-standing trend, the COVID-19 pandemic caused more resources and more functions to move online.

Program: Workforce Development

Program Effectiveness: Partly Achieved

The Workforce Development consultant works with public libraries, academic institutions, other government agencies, and community-based organizations to promote tools and services available to aid Washington

residents in training for advancement or job change. The consultant manages licenses that allow Washingtonians to take certification exams at little or no cost. And the consultant proctors many exams for people for whom their local libraries do not have the capacity for such a service.

Goal 1 Recommendations

Goal 1 was partly achieved by WSL. To improve achievement towards Goal 1 the following recommendations are suggested for WSL:

- **Digital Literacy.** Prioritize Digital Literacy investments to support life success in an increasingly online world and to best leverage state and federal broadband resources.

- **Resource Promotion.** With the relatively recent availability of LinkedIn, Northstar, and other employment resources, additional promotion is needed to ensure they are well adopted and fully used.

Goal 2: Preserve and Share Washington's Stories

WSL's Goal in this area is to connect Washingtonians to their history, employing digital initiatives, and other preservation strategies to tell the stories of local communities and to celebrate our common heritage. This Goal reflects WSL's recognition that Washingtonians can increase their appreciation of state and local history and use digital collections and resources to foster economic growth, strengthen education, and promote community pride. This Goal is also aligned with the Governor's state priority to build partnerships between local libraries and their communities and the Washington State Library.

The total project cost for activities across the grant cycle under Goal 2 (inclusive of matching funds) was $1.2 million. Of this amount, 100% of the costs were provided by LSTA funds. In addition, 12% of the total grant funding went to Goal 2 over the 2018-2022 grant cycle.

Regarding the IMLS Focal Areas and Intents, Goal 2 is connected to Lifelong Learning, Information Access, and Institutional Capacity. Of the 2018-2022 LSTA funds, about 85% was allocated for activities related to these Focal Areas. In the LSTA five-year plan, WSL incorporated strategies and activities in service of Goal 2 and the Focal Areas. The specific strategies and activities are summarized below in Exhibit 9.

For the purposes of evaluating WSL's progress towards these Goals and retaining consistency with WSL's SPR reports, the categorization of Goals and Measuring Success Focal Areas was maintained as reported. In total, two programmatic areas were reported as serving Goal 2. Some of the programs involved more than one activity and so served multiple primary Focal Areas. In this section two programs will be reviewed the Digitization Projects and projects related to Creating, Curating, and Utilizing Open Data.

Exhibit 9 Goal 2 Strategies and Activities from LSTA Five-year Plan

Strategies	Activities
2.1. Highlight the collections of Washington libraries and partner organizations through innovative discovery and metadata initiatives. 2.2. Preserve and maintain access to newspapers (news media) published in Washington State.	▪ The **Washington Rural Heritage** (WRH) project is a collaborative digitization program serving public libraries, tribal libraries, and partnering cultural heritage organizations, such as historical societies and museums. ▪ The **Washington Digital Newspapers** program digitizes papers across five main geographic regions and strives to add non-English language papers and news from the diverse cultures within our state. ▪ **DPLA Support Services** provide training, consulting, and grants to libraries seeking to develop digital collections and content. They also re-catalog, remediate, or enhance metadata for inclusion in a regional Digital Public Library of America Service Hub.
2.3. Manage and maintain a collaborative digitization program to highlight the collections of libraries, museums, and heritage organizations throughout the state. Increase visibility and access to unique and at-risk materials, including privately held family collections of Washingtonians.	▪ The **Washington Rural Heritage** (WRH) project is a collaborative digitization program serving public libraries, tribal libraries, and partnering cultural heritage organizations, such as historical societies and museums.

Source: Washington State Library (WSL) LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018-2022.

Program: Digitization Projects

Program Effectiveness: Achieved

Using LSTA and local funds, WSL has continued to preserve and make accessible artifacts and newspapers from Washington's history. During the 2018-2020 grant cycle, WSL directed $1.2 million to the Digitization and Creating, Curating, and Utilizing Open Data projects at the state and local levels. About 60.7% of these funds during this time, or $790,213, was used to support digitization efforts around the state that contribute to the Washington Rural Heritage digital repository.[4]

The Washington Rural Heritage digital repository currently includes material from the holdings of 166 institutions and 474 privately held collections throughout the state. Local project management is coordinated by libraries administering annual sub-grants from the WSL or sustaining existing digital collections using local staff and funding.

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[4] Washington Rural Heritage (WRH) Digital Repository: https://washingtonruralheritage.org

Washington Rural Heritage collections are made up of items of historical and cultural significance (i.e., archival, and special collections). These include old photographs, historical texts, memorabilia and ephemera, scrapbooks, maps, artwork, and objects and artifacts. Video and audio files (e.g., oral histories, lectures, interviews) are also part of the online collection. Many of these collections include unique historical resources not previously available in digital format.

About 30.3% of the funds during this time, or $511,382, was used to support historical newspaper digitization and access. Through a complicated process of scanning, implementing optical character recognition, metadata inclusion and enhancement, storage, and indexing, WSL recently reached a milestone of 500,000 historical newspaper pages that are freely available online.[5]

WSL also received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities during this period to digitize Washington newspapers to contribute to the Library of Congress's Chronicling America collection of historical newspapers throughout the US.

Stakeholder Input: Tribes have concerns about existing digitization platforms. While Tribes share an interest in preserving their culture through digital platforms, participants in the Tribal discussion group expressed a hesitancy to use State-funded platforms. The concern is that culturally significant information may be required to be shared as part of the public record if digitized. They stated that in contrast to State-supported platforms, Tribally oriented solutions allow more control of access, ensuring that Tribes can limit the ability of non-Tribal members to view culturally sensitive artifacts.

Program: Creating, Curating, and Utilizing Open Data

Program Effectiveness: Achieved

In 2019, WSL piloted a program identifying open data sets that libraries could use for many purposes including reference, assessment, and collections. There is now a dedicated consultant that spends half of her time (funded by LSTA) consulting with libraries all about open data. (The other half of her time is State-funded working with the Office of the CIO on state data projects.)

In the area of Continuing Education, during 2018-20, WSL provided 111 training sessions, with topics developed according to a needs assessment and strategic decisions based on its expertise. A total of 165 library staff attended professional conferences, either in person, or, online during the COVID-19 pandemic. In late 2017, WSL began the First Tuesdays monthly online training sessions available to all librarians and staff.[6] During the pandemic, attendance at First Tuesday's sessions increased dramatically.

Goal 2 Recommendation

Goal 2 was achieved by WSL. To strengthen efforts for Goal 2, the following recommendation is suggested for WSL:

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[5] Washington Digital Newspapers (WDN): https://washingtondigitalnewspapers.org/.

[6] (https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/firsttuesdays/)

- **Design Digitization resources suitable for Tribal needs.** Respect Tribal concerns regarding public access to digitized resources, either clarifying that access on existing platforms can be controlled to restrict non-Tribal access or supporting a platform that allows this functionality.

Goal 3: Serve All who Cannot Read Standard Print

WSL's Goal in this area is to expand the reach and effectiveness of the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) with innovative outreach initiatives to increase overall user population, establish and strengthen borrower relationships, and promote high quality, accessible library, and information resources. This Goal reflects WSL's desired outcome of WTBBL increasing the awareness and participation of eligible individuals throughout the state in their services and programs. This Goal is also aligned with the Governor's state priority issues to provide direct services to those unable to read standard print materials.

The total project cost for activities across the grant cycle under Goal 3 (inclusive of matching funds) was $4.1 million. Of this amount, $1.1 million or 27% of the project cost was provided by LSTA funds. The remaining budget was provided by provided by State Library maintenance of effort matching funds. In addition, this amount of funding accounted for 11% of LSTA dollars during the grant cycle.

Exhibit 10 Goal 3 Strategies and Activities from LSTA Five-year Plan

Strategies	Activities
3.1. Grow outreach and public awareness initiatives, developing strategic campaigns to connect specific, eligible user groups, particularly veterans, youth, and the elderly, with library service. 3.2. Enhance access to education, information, and literacy support for Washington's youth through innovative programming, outreach, and statewide partnerships. 3.3. Increase access to WTBBL audiobooks through more local production in English and Spanish, duplication on demand, personalized readership programs, and download instruction and support. 3.4. Realign volunteer priorities, strengthen, and expand the volunteer base.	• The **Washington Talking Book & Braille Library** builds community and provides equal access to information and reading materials for Washington residents unable to read standard print.

Source: Washington State Library (WSL) LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018-2022.

Regarding the IMLS Focal Areas and Intents, Goal 3 is connected to Information Access, Lifelong Learning, and Human Services. Of the 2018-2022 LSTA funds, about 75% was allocated for activities related to these Focal Areas. In addition, 29% of the funding in this grant cycle was provided by LSTA funds.

In the LSTA five-year plan, WSL incorporated strategies and activities in service of Goal 3 and the Focal Areas. Some of the programs involved more than one activity and so served multiple primary Focal Areas. The specific strategies and activities in service of Goal 3 are summarized in **Exhibit 10.**

For the purposes of evaluating WSL's progress towards these Goals and retaining consistency with WSL's SPR reports, the categorization of Goals and Measuring Success Focal Areas was maintained as reported. In total, one programmatic area was reported as serving Goal 3. In this section one program will be reviewed: the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library.

Program: Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

Program Effectiveness: Achieved

Unlike other goals, 100% of the funding for Goal 3 was directed to one program. This program is the Washington Talking Book & Braille Library (WTBBL) program. WTBBL provides access to library materials for residents who are blind, vision impaired, or have other physical or reading disabilities that interfere with their ability to read standard print. WTBBL personnel provide readers' advisory services in person, over the phone, and through an automated online recommendation system, to a user community primarily over the age of 65. The program maintains a remarkable number of volunteers: 250 individuals provide 28,000 hours of service annually. Volunteer activities include producing audio books and braille books with an emphasis on materials about Washington or written by Washington authors. The services are actively promoted by WTBBL personnel at state library meetings and through regional library system activities.

WTBBL houses and circulates a physical collection and administers Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD), both provided by the Library of Congress National Library Services for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. It also manages equipment loaned to patrons for use with audio books and provides an app for audio and electronic braille for iOS, Android, and Kindle platforms. On average, WTBBL circulates over 427,000 items annually, of which approximately 98% are audio books and patrons download over 145,000 items.. For the targeted elderly and disabled community in need of these specialized services, WTBBL meets Goals of providing access to digital and traditional formats and providing help from library staff, as demonstrated in a recent Essential Services Survey (n=1,558). Nearly (94%) of patrons surveyed considered WTBBL services to be "above average" or "excellent."

Goal 3 Recommendation

Goal 3 was achieved by WSL. To strengthen efforts for Goal 3, the following recommendation is suggested for WSL:

- **Washington Talking Book & Braille Library.** Continue to support and promote the WTBBL which provides essential services to residents who are blind, visually impaired, or have other physical or reading disabilities.

Goal 4: Support the Incarcerated and Hospitalized in their Recovery and Release

WSL's Goal in this area is to expand and enhance the provision of direct library and information services to incarcerated and hospitalized populations in support of education, literacy, recovery, recreation, and re-entry. This Goal reflects WSL's desired outcome that inmates of prisons and patients of hospitals will increase their appreciation for, and understanding of, the value of library programs they receive focused on literacy, personal growth, and education. This Goal is also aligned with the Governor's state priority

issues to provide direct services to residents of these facilities and builds partnerships between DOC, DSHS, local libraries, and their communities.

The total project cost for activities across the grant cycle under Goal 4 (inclusive of matching funds) was $2.5 million. Of this amount, $2.4 million or 95% of the project cost was provided by LSTA funds. The remaining budget was provided by State Library maintenance of effort matching funds. In addition, this amount of funding accounted for 22% of all LSTA dollars during the grant cycle.

Exhibit 11 Goal 4 Strategies and Activities from LSTA Five-year Plan

Strategies	Activities
4.1 Provide direct library service to incarcerated and hospitalized populations to the extent allowed to staff of these institutions. 4.2 Work with the Department of Corrections (DOC) and other partners to identify re-entry resources and training and make those available as part of a coordinated program to support inmates preparing for re-entry. 4.3 Partner with DSHS to expand support of active treatment and recovery for patients of Eastern and Western State Hospitals. 4.4 Foster a deeper understanding and connection to literature and poetry through coordinated statewide therapeutic literacy programming such as Poetry Month, Summer Reading, and ILS Reads.	▪ The **Institutional Libraries** serve state hospital and correctional facility residential populations, with the delivery of professional library and information services to support their needs. Each state hospital and correctional facility branch provides material for re-entry, recovery, education, and recreation, as well as a prosocial space where inmates can access resources needed to make positive changes.

Source: Washington State Library (WSL) LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018-2022

Regarding the IMLS Focal Areas and Intents, Goal 4 is connected to Information Access, Lifelong Learning, Economic and Employment Development, and Human Services. Of the 2018-2022 LSTA funds, about 90% was allocated for activities related to these Focal Areas. In the LSTA five-year plan, WSL incorporated strategies and activities in service of Goal 4 and the Focal Areas. Some of the programs involved more than one activity and so served multiple primary Focal Areas. The specific strategies and activities are summarized in **Exhibit 11**.

For the purposes of evaluating WSL's progress towards these Goals and retaining consistency with WSL's SPR reports, the categorization of Goals and Measuring Success Focal Areas was maintained as reported. In total, two programmatic areas were reported as serving Goal 4. In this section one program will be reviewed: the Institutional Libraries program.

Program: Institutional Libraries

Program Effectiveness: Achieved

WSL is obligated by statute to provide library services to inmates in state facilities. The WSL Institutional Libraries program provides direct services to nine state correctional facilities and two psychiatric hospitals for adults. The Department of Corrections (DOC) is not required to compensate the State Library for providing services to their prisoners and has only occasionally provided funding under special agreement. DOC maintains a separate system of law libraries for prisoners to conduct research, and in some locked units, inmates maintain a collection of donated books.

In the 2018-2022 grant cycle, services provided through WSL' Institutional Libraries program were represented by Goal 4. During this evaluation period, WSL directed $2.5 million (17%) of its LSTA funding towards the correctional libraries or Goal 4. This amount of funding accounted for 95% of the funding need to support Goal 4 and correctional libraries.

The corrections centers served have a total inmate population of 15,829. Three additional small corrections centers with fewer than 500 inmates do not have libraries staffed by WLS. The libraries are open to inmates an average of 15-25 hours per week, as contracted, for a total of about 10,000 hours per year. In addition to providing general information services and access to educational, recreational, and recovery materials, specialized materials are available to prepare inmates for re-entry into society, including re-entry binders covering public and nonprofit resources to assist with the transition.

The corrections libraries reported an estimated 312,000 visits from inmates in 2019 and circulated approximately 450,268 items from their collections. Additionally, WSL staff responded to approximately 913,380 reference questions in 2019. The rate of visits, circulation, and reference transactions indicates that approximately 30 very active patrons visit each library each hour they are open. This level of service was delivered despite COVID-related interruptions which prevented WSL staff from accessing some facilities for extended periods of time.

Goal 4 Recommendation

Goal 4 was achieved by WSL. To strengthen efforts for Goal 4, the following recommendation is suggested for WSL:

- **Institutional Libraries Program.** Work with the Secretary of State legislative team and representatives to appropriate State funding to restore ILS staffing levels to pre-Great Recession levels.

Goal 5: Develop Professional Skills and Build Capacity Among all Libraries

WSL's desire in this area is to elevate the quality of library service and caliber of library staff through statewide projects, facilitation, consulting, grants, training, and modeling best practices to build capacity in libraries statewide. This Goal reflects WSL's desired outcome of library staff who participate in WSL projects and programs being able to increase their topical knowledge and skill level to serve their customers more effectively. This Goal is also aligned with the Governor's state priority issues to build capacity to enhance library service to the local community and develops partnerships between local

libraries and their communities.

In addition to a focus on professional development for library staff, WSL seeks to expand the capacity of libraries to provide resources through and collaborative purchasing and technical assistance with all types of libraries.

The total project cost for activities across the grant cycle under Goal 5 (inclusive of matching funds) was $7.8 million. Of this amount, $5.2 million or 67% of the project cost was provided by LSTA funds. The remaining budget was provided by provided by State Library maintenance of effort matching funds. In addition, this amount of funding accounted for 44% of all LSTA dollars during the grant cycle.

Exhibit 12 Goal 5 Strategies and Activities from LSTA Five-year Plan

Strategies	Activities
5.1. Provide training in a variety of formats to local library staff to enhance their knowledge, skills, and abilities to better serve their communities. 5.2. Develop and utilize standardized and effective project management practices for libraries receiving funding and undertaking projects. 5.3. Create grant opportunities that include professional training opportunities, resources, and service/program development.	▪ **Training** serves library staff from all types of libraries to increase their effectiveness in working with their community. ▪ The **K-12 Teacher-Librarian** project facilitates the development of curriculum and training programs for teacher-librarians and other K-12 library staff around the state. ▪ The **Youth Services** project facilitates learning, interaction, and sharing of best practices for library staff in the area of early learning and youth services. ▪ **Professional Development Grants** allow local libraries the opportunity to send their staff to training events and to bring in trainers to enhance the knowledge and skills of library staff and trustees. ▪ **Grants to Libraries** fund development of new or enhanced library programs and services.
5.4. Partner with libraries to build organizational capacity and deliver cooperative services in order to provide enhanced library service to the residents of the state.	▪ The **Statewide Database Licensing Project** leverages the combined purchasing power of the state's nonprofit, public, Tribal, academic, K12, research, and hospital libraries to save millions of dollars in purchasing subscriptions to a suite of research database products. ▪ **Off the Page: Downloadable Audiobooks and eBooks** assists a wide range of Washington libraries in offering eBooks and downloadable audiobooks to their patrons by providing group purchase opportunities that make these formats more affordable, especially for smaller libraries. ▪ The **Ask-WA** program provides a range of online reference services for Washington residents by creating a

Strategies	Activities
	network of collaboration and support among libraries through the state.
	▪ **Statewide Assistance to Libraries** and **Technology Services** shares WSL staff expertise with libraries throughout the state to reduce local library expenses and increase the capacity of library staff to provide a higher level of service to their communities than might otherwise be possible.
	▪ **K20 Library Support** and other **IT Services** develop and provide all users with access to information through reliable high speed Internet connectivity and infrastructure.
	▪ **Librarians Supporting Student Success** provides library faculty in Community and Technical Colleges (CTC) training on teaching practices and assessment. These faculty will apply what they have learned at their local CTC.

Source: Washington State Library (WSL) LSTA Five-Year Plan 2018-2022.

Regarding the IMLS Focal Areas and Intents, Goal 5 is connected to Information Access, Lifelong Learning, Economic and Employment Development, and Human Services. Of the 2018-2022 LSTA funds, about 90% was allocated for activities related to these Focal Areas. In the LSTA five-year plan, WSL incorporated strategies and activities in service of Goal 5 and the Focal Areas. Some of the programs involved more than one activity and so served multiple primary Focal Areas. The specific strategies and activities are summarized in **Exhibit** 12.

For the purposes of evaluating WSL's progress towards these Goals and retaining consistency with WSL's SPR reports, the categorization of Goals and Measuring Success Focal Areas was maintained as reported. In total, two programmatic areas were reported as serving Goal 5. In this section four programs will be reviewed: Continuing Education, Statewide Assistance for Libraries - Consulting Services, Electronic Resources, and SimplyE/Palace projects.

Program: Continuing Education

Program Effectiveness: Achieved

From 2018-20 WSL invested a significant amount in Continuing Education (CE), which is comprised of both hosted training sessions and support for librarians and staff to attend conferences. The bulk of these funds (88.2%) were allocated to training ($583,926) and 11.8% ($68,939) went to professional development grants for conference attendance.

Topics were developed according to a needs assessment and strategic decisions included: *collection development & management, digital literacy, technology, library management, early childhood education*, and *youth services*. Notable continuing CE programs included:

▪ LEAP into Science.

▪ Research-based storytime and early childhood education practices.

- The establishment of monthly First Tuesday's online training sessions on timely subjects for librarians and staff statewide.

- Supercharged Storytime, an online orientation and community of practice.

- Transforming Teen Services.

- The All Aboard for Kindergarten program, a statewide school readiness program that brought together 25 stakeholders from libraries and the early learning community.

Stakeholder Input: Trainings are valued for personal connections. Trainings create opportunity for connection with peers and a broader community of practice. This is particularly important for smaller libraries, including Tribal libraries, which may include staff members without a formal education in library sciences. Stakeholder interview participants emphasized the importance of these trainings to retain and develop staff, contributing to significantly better services for the communities they serve.

Professional development opportunities were provided in a variety of formats and locations to ensure that libraries across the state were able to participate. Library staff who attended professional conferences reported learning best practices, developing ideas for new services, and increased confidence and enthusiasm for delivering high-value services.

Program: Statewide Assistance for Libraries - Consulting Services

Program Effectiveness: Achieved

WSL's project managers and staff provide support to the state's libraries through three consulting programs: *Statewide Assistance to Libraries, Technology Services for Libraries,* and *Youth Services.*

In the SPR reporting data, Statewide Assistance to Libraries and Technology Services for Libraries was associated with Goal 5 activities, receiving $2.5 million of LSTA-related funding (17.5% of all funding). In addition, the total amount of funding needed to support Goal 5 activities was covered by LSTA funds.

WSL prioritizes high-level service for small, rural, and tribal libraries. In 2021, WSL provided scholarships to 13 library staff to attend the Association of Rural and Small Libraries conference.

Consulting Services included: phone and email communication, site visits, support materials, and training. *Statewide Assistance to Libraries* disseminates information, helps libraries apply for E-Rate, provides technical assistance setting up hardware and software, and tailors training. *Youth Services* provided access to the Collaborative Summer Library Program, youth STE(A)M programming, collections of LEGOs, programmable robotics, and other builder kits. *Technology Services for Libraries* set up hardware and software, implemented online library catalogs, built, and maintained websites, and improved network capacity.

Stakeholder Input: In stakeholder discussion groups with rural and small libraries, staff expressed appreciation for the consulting services provided by WSL. Staff in these libraries often lack library and technology services, which limits their capacity to serve their communities. Participants in the large library discussion group also emphasized the importance of this function for smaller libraries, emphasizing how critical it is. Examples include both awareness raising, promoting funding opportunities that libraries might not otherwise be aware of, and technical support. The latter could include support in planning and implementation, including how to plan for and execute a new initiative. This could entail establishing a sustainable funding plan to ensure the effort can be maintained, support in program design and how to write an RFP and manage a contractor for implementation.

Program: Electronic Resources

Program Effectiveness: Partly Achieved

The Electronic Resources program, which includes both the Statewide Database Licensing (SDL) and Downloadable eBooks & Audiobook programs, provides consortial purchasing and subsidies to libraries that lower the cost of providing eResources. In 2021, 61 public libraries, 35 community and technical colleges, 23 private colleges, 9 educational service districts, 25 special libraries, and 4 tribal libraries were members of SDL. Forty-five public libraries were participants in the Washington Anytime Library consortium, which provides downloadable audiobooks and eBooks.

The SDL program is critical for allowing libraries to offer access to databases. It continues to be a highly valued service in the library community. The SDL budget was $1.25 million over 2017-2021 for the subscription of the awarded databases. The program is designed so that the participating libraries pay half the cost of the subscriptions. In the federal fiscal year 2020 ending in September 2020, there were 2.7 million retrievals/views across all libraries in the state. This amount of activity is robust and still warrants the statewide approach, however usage has trended slowly lower over the last 20 years despite a healthy increase in the state's population.

The Washington Anytime Library provides public library access to eBooks and downloadable audiobooks available through OverDrive. The 45 libraries that participate in the Washington Anytime Library consortium serve a combined population of 785,000. In 2020, the Anytime Library circulated 726,281 audiobooks and 1,053,447 eBooks, a more than two-fold increase from five years earlier.

WSL's efforts to coordinate consortial purchases, keep costs low, and function as a convener in discussions about eResources has been highly effective in managing this landscape and bringing libraries into collaboration around it. Without the LSTA subsidies for the eResource subscription, many of the participating libraries would not prioritize subscription databases in their budgets.

Stakeholder Input: Statewide Database Licensing. Stakeholder discussion groups with smaller libraries emphasized the importance and value of the Statewide Database Licensing Program, which was said to create access to high quality electronic resources in communities that would otherwise not have access. This access is important to teaching digital literacy and the use of trusted sources of information and create continuity for students as they transition from primary schools to institutions of higher learning.

Participants from larger libraries were more critical of how the program is currently implemented, describing opportunities for greater impact through more coordinated purchasing of agreed-upon services and resources. They critiqued some purchasing decisions and called for greater collaboration in reviewing and vetting potential vendors that leverages the staff capacity and expertise of large library systems. They called on the WSL to convene and facilitate discussions to identify desirable purchases, and to involve library staff in negotiations with vendors, seeking to include the spending power of as many libraries as possible in purchasing high-quality resources at the best possible value.

Program: SimpleE/Palace.

Program Effectiveness: Partly Achieved

In late 2019, WSL released an RFP for a provider to implement and host the SimplyE app for any public library in the state that was interested, and WSL would underwrite the implementation and hosting fees, using LSTA funds, for at least three years. SimplyE is an open-source eBook application developed by the New York Public Library funded by IMLS and others. LYRASIS won the RFP and in March 2020 began setting up interested libraries. By the end of 2020, seven libraries were set up and actively assessing the app at their libraries. Those libraries are Anacortes Public Library, Asotin County Library, Bellingham Public Library, Everett Public Library, Kalama Public Library, Walla Walla Rural Library, and Whatcom County Library System.

In 2021, the Knight Foundation granted LYRASIS and the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) $5 million to take the SimplyE codebase and create a product that could be better supported and scalable. The name of this new application is the Palace Project. Most of 2021 was spent getting the Palace Project ready for libraries to use. Since WSL had already contracted with LYRASIS for the SimplyE app and utilizing DPLA for statewide eBook purchasing, the seven participating libraries were automatically moved over to the Palace Project application. Already in 2022 one more library has been implemented to assess—King County Library System — and two others have expressed interest.

Goal 5 Recommendations

Goal 5 was partly achieved by WSL. To strengthen efforts for Goal 5, the following recommendations are suggested for WSL:

- **Awareness Raising and Technical Assistance.** Increase WSL staff and resources dedicated to raising awareness of funding opportunities and providing technical assistance, including planning for long-term sustainability, project implementation, and hands-on mentoring for less well-resourced libraries. Consider options to organize promotions and technical support through channels and staff dedicated to serving targeted library types.

- **Consortial Purchasing.** Increase efforts to leverage collective library expertise in vetting potential products and services, seeking to include the negotiating and purchasing power of more libraries in consortial purchasing efforts.

- **SimpleE/Palace.** Expand collaboration with other state library agencies and organizations like the Urban Library Council and the State Libraries of California, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, as well as the Canadian Urban Library Council (CULC) for broader expansion and adoption of this platform. Widespread adoption and purchasing power are necessary for continued success.

Process Questions

Process Overview

This section looks at how WSL used State Program Report (SPR) data along with other sources to guide the development of the 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan. This section also looks at how the previous Five-Year Evaluation informed the 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, broadening the focus from two Goals to five.

Using Data to Guide Activities

WSL actively employs a variety of data sources to ensure investment decisions reflect the needs of the Washington library community and the residents of Washington state and that implementation of programs is monitored and evaluated. Data-based decision making covers the use of LSTA funding for statewide projects, smaller projects targeted at specific needs, projects to take advantage of various opportunities including the implementation of emerging technology, or projects that target a specific segment of the Washington library community and their customers.

WSL collects a wide variety of information regarding program outputs and some information regarding outcomes, mostly through grantee reports and web analytics for online resources and services. WSL used **SPR data** to refine ongoing activities and guide the development of new activities in the Five-Year Plan. Individual programs and projects are reviewed on an annual basis when developing the **LSTA State Programs Report**. Sub-grants are monitored by WSL staff on an ongoing basis using a variety of methods including **site visits**, review of **quarterly and final reports**, and **claims for reimbursement. Outcomes and related assessment activities** are developed and implemented as a normal part of project planning and operation.

Advisory Bodies

WSL leadership maintain and regularly consult a number of advisory bodies to stay informed on Washington library needs and trends, and to gather input on strategic and programmatic decisions. WSL advisory bodies are composed of active library practitioners and partners and include the **Library Council of Washington** and **project advisory committees** as described below. WSL leadership has also cultivated a team of dedicated **project managers** who are expert in their respective areas and able to represent the needs of their constituencies in decision-making conversations.

Library Council of Washington

The Library Council of Washington (LCW) is the chief advisory group for WSL administrators regarding use of LSTA funds. The Council represents a broad range of library types and constituencies as reflected in the list on the inside cover of this evaluation. Council members seek input from their respective communities of practice and the constituencies they serve to inform policy and program development. Members represent the following library types, interests, and service populations, including:

- Public libraries serving populations under 100,000

- Public libraries serving populations over 100,000

- Rural libraries
- School libraries
- 2-year and 4-year academic libraries
- Special libraries
- Technology
- Underserved
- Cultural diversity

The Council convenes quarterly and serves as a catalyst for identifying and guiding successful responses to, library-related issues of statewide concern. The LCW participates in annual priority setting and LSTA budget allocation discussions. WSL leadership presents an annual work plan to the Council for the upcoming year; Council members the discuss the work plan, consult their respective constituencies, and provide input to WSL for consideration.

Project Advisory Committees

A number of LSTA programs are developed by input from an advisory committee overseen by the project manager. Advisory committees are composed of volunteers from various library and partner institutions with relevant expertise, as well as representatives from the project's established target audience. Committee members regularly advise on strategic and administrative aspects of the project to support its success. Examples include the Anytime Library, Youth Services programs, the WTBBL, and broadband/digital equity efforts.

Project Managers

WSL project managers are experts in their respective focus area and are empowered to make strategic decisions regarding the projects they oversee. The WSL's eleven LSTA project managers generally oversee several projects which provide them with a rich set of insights regarding the service needs and priorities of Washington libraries. Project managers also maintain regular contact with their project advisory committees, project grantees/participants, professional organizations, and relevant partner organizations. In addition, project managers meet with each other to exchange lessons learned regarding their projects, the libraries they serve, and to collectively problem-solve when challenges emerge. WSL leadership also consult project managers to ensure their strategic decisions are grounded in the current needs of Washington libraries and reflect relevant best practices.

Stakeholder Input: WSL Project Managers matter. Participants in Stakeholder Discussion Groups were not shy to point out the importance of the individual staff who serve as WSL LSTA project managers. They noted that project managers were essential for raising awareness of funding opportunities and providing support to applicants and participants. The importance of this role for Tribal and small- and medium-sized libraries was particularly emphasized. This relates to the Goal 5 recommendation for **Awareness Raising and Technical Assistance.**

Changes to the Five-Year Plan

In the 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan, WSL outlined five Goals to work towards. These Goals were approved by IMLS did not change during the course of the 2018-2022 funding cycle. In addition, WSL plans to maintain these Goals for the 2023-2027 funding cycle.

Based on the previous evaluation, WSL's most significant strength is its ability to convene and promote collaboration between and among libraries of all types in the state. Building on this strength, analysis of past performance, and emerging priorities, six overarching recommendations for WSL were surfaced in the 2013-2017 evaluation with regard to future activity funded through LSTA. These recommendations from the prior evaluation are summarized here:

Overarching Recommendations from 2013-2017 Evaluation

1. **Forming partnerships.** WSL is seen as a potential agent in helping libraries form partnerships with each other, particularly between libraries of different types (e.g., between public libraries and Community and Technical College (CTC) libraries). The most significant barriers to forming partnerships are time to cultivate relationships, uncertainty about how to share resources, and concerns about equity in contributions and benefits.
2. **Communications and collaboration.** Individual library efforts are difficult for libraries to maintain and libraries across the state look to WSL for assistance in providing collaboration tools and opportunities for libraries to reduce redundancies and enhance their ability to quickly respond to community needs as they emerge.
3. **Evaluation and metrics.** WSL's leadership in this area could be aimed towards increasing training opportunities about evaluation practices and facilitating work on common metrics among libraries in the state. While some of the difficultly producing evaluation data is connected to concerns about patron privacy, a larger issue is uncertainty about what to measure and how to gather reliable data.
4. **Staffing.** WOIS/The Career Information System projects about 450 annual vacancies in library positions through 2022. WSL leadership is needed in cultivating new librarians and working with library schools to ensure graduates are equipped with the skills they need to be successful.
5. *Professional development.* WSL provides many professional development opportunities and surveys the library community to determine what topics to offer. Nonetheless, there is still room for more continuing education, particularly in management topics. With a great deal of focus on technology, some library staff expressed concern that traditional library training topics, like reference interviews and collection management, are not being taught to new librarians.

In addition to the five recommendations from the 2017-2021 evaluation, WSL has a goal to **Work at a statewide level to address the needs of all types of libraries and the communities they serve within Washington state.** WSL provides a variety of statewide services that are available to libraries to enhance the level of service to the local library's users and potential users. WSL should continue this work to build capacity within libraries of all types and sizes and all areas of the state. These services include development and implementation of statewide projects, grant awards, consulting and training, and development of best practices.

WSL developed new Goals for the 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan based on these recommendations,

statewide trends, and priorities about where libraries can (and do) make an impact, and a review of national trends, including the IMLS Five-Year Strategic Plan 2012 – 2016. The 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan focuses on five total Goals whereas the previous plan only focused on two.

In addition to Goal-specific recommendations listed above, this evaluation of the 2018-2022 Five Year Plan makes the following overarching recommendations for consideration in the development of the 2023-2017 Five Year Plan:

Recommendation: Goals and Equity/Inclusion. Retain the existing five Goals which work well to structure the State Library's efforts. Apply a robust equity and inclusion lens when updating programmatic priorities to ensure resources are targeted effectively at supporting rural and urban underserved communities.

Recommendation: All Libraries. Find something for all libraries, leveraging large libraries' expertise and commitment to the success of all Washington libraries. Many of the programs funded by LSTA resources are beneficial for smaller and relatively less-resourced libraries. Goal-specific recommendations contained in this evaluation seek to enhance potential benefits for smaller libraries by providing additional resources for awareness and technical assistance. While larger libraries may benefit less from such resources, they can benefit significantly from, and be valuable participants in, a well-organized statewide consortial purchasing effort as noted under Goal 5.

Recommendation: Facilities and Technology, as well as Collections. Contemporary library services are delivered as much through high functioning facilities and technology as through high quality collections. Stakeholder interview participants encouraged the WSL to organize resources and staff expertise and capacity around all three topics, treating facilities and technology with the same importance as collections. Technology was particularly emphasized given its increasing importance as a gateway to additional resources, both for library staff and community members. Related sub-recommendations include:

- **Increase advocacy** among state government, including the Secretary of State Office, the Department of Enterprise Services, the Department of Commerce and the Broadband Office, the legislature, and others to emphasize the importance of digital access as well as and sometimes in tension with cybersecurity.

- **Prioritize funding opportunities that facilitate digital access and digital literacy** for Washington state residents, particularly among populations that have limited access to resources. To ensure access to broadband and digital literacy skills specifically address underserved communities, expand collaboration with community-based organizations embedded in underserved communities in both rural and urban areas.

Use of the Prior Evaluation to Inform Data Collection

All information related to the evaluation and its implementation is publicly available on the WSL website as it becomes available. Further dissemination occurs through a variety of methods including electronic mailing lists to library groups, members of the Library Council of Washington (LCW) sharing information with its constituencies, as well as through meetings and other information-sharing venues.

The previous evaluation employed a mixed methods approach to engage stakeholders and gather qualitative and quantitative data regarding the activities, performance, and value of programs funded by LSTA. The evaluators collected data through review of program documentation, budgets, and grantee

reports provided by WSL; interviews with WSL administrators and program managers; focus groups with the Library Council of Washington and the Library Leadership Council at the biannual public library directors meeting; and several mixed groups of library staff throughout the state.

The 2013-2017 evaluation was used to inform the overall approach and methods for the 2018-2022 evaluation. In particular, the previous evaluation was reviewed to understand structure and content and to determine what data was required to assess progress made towards WSL's 2018-2022 Goals.

Methodology Questions

Evaluation Implementation

To achieve an objective evaluation of WSL's 2018-2022 LSTA funded activities, WSL contracted with BERK Consulting. BERK is an interdisciplinary consultancy integrating strategy, planning, and policy development; financial and economic analysis; and facilitation, design, and communications. BERK has helped libraries across the country adapt to rapid changes in how patrons search, use, and share information and how the fundamental role of libraries is changing as our communities evolve. BERK's work with libraries also includes strategic planning, capital facilities planning and feasibility studies, community satisfaction surveys, economic and community benefits studies, and funding and financing studies.

The evaluation of the 2018-2022 LSTA funded activities was designed with the intention to fulfill IMLS reporting requirements, evaluate progress made toward the goals set out in the 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan, and support WSL in developing the 2023-2027 plan. The evaluation has assisted WSL to detail the investments made, benefits provided, and effective practices and recommendations to carry forward.

Evaluation Methodology

BERK is adept at helping organizations anticipate and respond to change in a thoughtful and strategic manner. The overall approach to the evaluation involved close collaboration with WSL to refine methods for engaging stakeholders, gathering qualitative information, and assessing the funding and activities outlined in the State Program Report (SPR) data.

BERK collected data through three primary methods described below: systematic review of State Program Report (SPR) data provided through IMLS by WSL, small group stakeholder sessions with library leaders across the state, and a survey to reach peer libraries and librarians. BERK also referenced the 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan, 2013-2017 Five-Year Plan, and 2013-2017 Evaluation to understand previous issues faced by WSL and implementation of previous recommendations.

Program Documentation Provided by the Washington State Library

WSL provided BERK with extensive documentation regarding LSTA-funded programs, itemized in Appendix D: Bibliography of all documents reviewed. The documents included budgets, annual reports to the IMLS, online resources and services, and other technical documents.

Review Of Annual Reports

BERK reviewed Annual Reports provided by WSL covering the 2018-2022 grant period. This review focused on projects, activities, and intents per the SPR system structure. BERK reviewed two datasets: one with SPR data for all states and another with data focused specifically on WSL activities. Both datasets were used to determine overall funding received, allocations by goal, focal area and intent, and activities.

This review was also used to determine what gaps in information existed, and how those gaps could be filled through the qualitative methods of stakeholder sessions and a survey.

Small-Group Stakeholder Sessions

BERK conducted five small-group stakeholder sessions with libraries around the state. These sessions also included Library Council of Washington (LCW) members. The sessions were held in spring of 2022 with the following groups:

1. Large libraries

- Fort Vancouver Regional Libraries
- King County Library System
- Pierce County Library System

- Seattle Public Library
- Sno-Isle Library System
- Spokane Public Library

2. Smaller libraries from relatively more affluent communities, eastern and western Washington
3. Smaller libraries from relatively less affluent communities, eastern and western Washington
4. Academic libraries (including University of Washington, Washington State University, etc.)
5. Tribal libraries (with select individuals rather than a full Tribal group)

The discussion groups covered previous investments and how LSTA dollars should be focused on the future. The full list of questions is outlined in Appendix C: Stakeholder Discussion Groups. The key themes distilled by BERK from these stakeholder sessions include:

- **Advocacy:** There was a shared interest for more advocacy regarding the importance of technology and access within State government (with SOS, DES, etc.).

- **Existing Programs:** There is a strong appreciation for LSTA funding including Database Subscriptions and Trainings. The subscriptions are cost efficient and either create access or free up resources for investment in other collections and support schoolwork with vetted articles, and the trainings create opportunity for connection with peers/community of practice, which is particularly important for smaller libraries, including Tribal Libraries.

- **Future Funds:** There was support for focusing future funds on technology, which is a gateway to other resources, especially post-pandemic, and balancing cybersecurity with access.

- **Resources:** Shared interest for more resources to be put to awareness raising, technical assistance (including project implementation and long-range planning for sustainability), and for facilities and technology that are as strong as collections.

- **Tribal Libraries:** The circumstances and needs for Tribal Libraries circumstances vary considerably. Of note, there are concerns about digitization of resources if they become public records. There is a preference for platforms that allow controlled access.

- **WSL Approach to Funding:** Several stakeholders agreed that Washington's decentralized approach diminishes the ability to focus and guide investments and that funding eligibility requirements can get in the way of some benefiting (e.g., E-Rate, Tech Soup).

Survey

BERK conducted a survey to support the evaluation. The survey was designed to learn about what investments were made, what benefits provided, what effective practices were established with LSTA funds, and if funding was leveraged to establish any programs long term. Participants could share thoughts

about how best to focus LSTA funding in the coming five years. See **Appendix B: Survey and Survey Results** for more details.

Analysis

The analysis for this evaluation used fewer methods than the 2013-2017 evaluation. This evaluation relied heavily on quantitative SPR data and qualitative information from the stakeholder sessions and survey. These data sources complemented each other and were analyzed with a focus on WSL's 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan goals, funding allocations, and with attention to groups that represent a substantial focus for the LSTA Five-Year Plan activities, in accordance with the evaluation guidelines.

Additionally, BERK used the 2018-2022 Five-Year plan to organize the evaluation of goals, activities, and strategies. This plan helped the evaluators determine if goals were achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved per the IMLS guidelines. Reliability was supported through systematic use of original sources.

Stakeholders Involved

Stakeholders representing the range of libraries and their user communities were engaged through the combination of small-group stakeholder sessions and the survey. Both methods asked about what investments were made, what benefits provided, what effective practices were established with LSTA funds and if funding was leveraged to establish any programs long term. The stakeholders involved and the discussion guide with questions can be seen in **Appendix C: Discussion Guide and Survey Results.**

Communication of Findings and Recommendations

The 2018-2022 evaluation report includes findings about effective past practices, the efficacy in implementing the activities to advance state goals, and ideas for the 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan. The evaluation also includes recommendations for WSL goals, future activities, and next Five-Year Plan. This report will be available online through the WSL website, disseminated directly to stakeholders, publicized through e-mail lists to library groups, and distributed to constituencies through the Library Council of Washington.

Appendices

Appendix A: Acronyms

Acronym	Description
AskWA	Ask WA Virtual Reference Services
BARD	Braille and Audio Reading Downloads
CE	Continuing Education
COSLA	Chief Officers of State Library Agencies
CTC	Community and Technical College
DOC	Department of Corrections
DPLA	Digital Public Library of America
DSHS	Department of Social and Health Services
ELA	English Language Arts
IL	Information Literacy
ILL	Interlibrary Loan
ILS	Institutional Library Service
IMLS	Institute of Museum and Library Services
IT	Information Technology
LCW	Library Council of Washington
LSTA	Library Services and Technology Act
MOE	Maintenance of Effort
MOOC	Massive Open Online Courses
MOS	Microsoft Office Specialist
NGSS	Next Generation Science Standards
OBE	Outcome-Based Evaluation
OCLC	Online Computer Library Center, Inc.
OER	Open Educational Resources
SDL	Statewide Database Licensing Program
SLAA	State Library Administrative Agency
SPR	State Program Report
STE(A)M	Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics
TLC[3]	Teacher Librarian Common Core Cadre
VIEWS2	Valuable Initiative in Early Learning that Work Successfully
WA	Washington State
WDN	Washington Digital Newspapers
WOIS	WOIS/The Career Information System
WJ	WebJunction
WRH	Washington Rural Heritage Program
WSL	Washington State Library
WTBBL	Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

Appendix B: Survey and Survey Results

An online survey was open from February 15 to March 3, 2022 and promoted to the library community via WSL listservs and social media, including Facebook and Twitter]. The survey instrument is shown on the following pages, followed by a summary of input received.

Washington State Library

Survey

Welcome

The Washington State Library is evaluating its Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan from 2018-2022 and preparing for the next Five-Year Plan. **As part of the evaluation and strategic plan effort, we are engaging with library staff from around the state through a survey.**

This survey is designed to get input from experts – you! We would like to learn about what investments were made, benefits provided, and effective practices were established with LSTA funds and if funding was leveraged to establish any programs long term. We also want to hear your thoughts about how best to focus LSTA funding in the coming five years.

The survey is anonymous and should take 5-10 minutes to complete. Thank you for your time and input!

Questions

Evaluation of 2018-2022 Funding

The Washington State Library manages Library Services and Technology Act funds over five-year planning periods. Please help us understand the value of current programs.

1. LSTA funds support the following direct service programs that are administered directly by the Washington State Library. How valuable are they to your community?

   Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

   Institutional Libraries Services (Libraries in state prisons and mental hospitals)

2. During the 2018-2022 grant cycle, the following LSTA-funded projects provided support to libraries around Washington, including public libraries, academic libraries, school libraries, tribal libraries, and others received funding. Please indicate how valuable these projects were for members of your community.

   - Ask-WA (24/7 reference service)
   - Digital Literacy
   - Digital Public Library of America Support Services
   - SimplyE / Palace Project ebook application
   - IT and broadband support for libraries
   - Washington Anytime Library eBooks consortium
   - Open Data creation, discovery, & reference

   - Professional Development Grants
   - Board and trustee consulting and training
   - Statewide Database Licensing
   - Training for librarians
   - Washington Digital Newspapers
   - Washington Rural Heritage
   - Workforce Development
   - Youth Services

3. Please offer suggestions to improve any of the above projects, particularly any you scored lowly.

4. LSTA funds are invested in the following categories. Please indicate how valuable each category is to members of your community.

- Collections/content (including e-book purchasing support and statewide database licensing) purchasing/consortium

- History and preservation (such digitizing historical Washington newspapers, Washington Rural Heritage digitization grant program)

- Technical services (such as broadband, E-rate consulting, cybersecurity training)

- Training (in topics of interest for librarians, such as DEI training, homelessness, trauma, etc.)

- Trustee and board consultation (including resources and training for new directors, board members, and trustees)

- Youth services (such as summer reading programs, teacher-librarian training, assessment)

Looking Ahead to the 2023-2027 Funding Cycle

5. Where would you like WSL to focus funding in the future?

6. How much would you like WSL to target the following emerging needs?

- Broadband access
- Cybersecurity
- Digital literacy
- Telehealth
- Workforce development
- Other

7. How much would you like WSL to prioritize programs that serve the following groups?

- Homeless
- New immigrants
- Seniors
- Underserved pops
- Youth
- Other

About Your Library

8. What kind of library do you represent?

- Academic
- Public
- School
- Tribal
- Other

9. What size population does your library serve?

- Less than 1,000 people
- Between 1,000 and 4,000 people
- Between 4,001 and 15,000 people
- More than 15,000 people

10. What is your library's annual operating budget?

- Less than $500,000
- Between $500,000 and $1 million
- Between $1 million and $5 million
- More than $5 million

Survey Close

11. What else would you like to share, either about the effectiveness of the 2018-2022 round or for the next round, from 2023-2027?

Summary of Survey Results

Sixty-nine respondents provided input to the online survey.

Survey Respondent Characteristics

Respondent characteristics were as follows. Note that not all respondents answered every question.

Library Type

	Number	Percent
Academic	24	35.8%
Public	29	43.3%
School	2	3.0%
Tribal	4	6.0%
Other	8	11.9%
Total	**67**	**100.0%**

Population Served

	Number	Percent
Less than 1,000 people	5	8.2%
Between 1,000 and 4,000 people	21	34.4%
Between 4,001 and 15,000 people	16	26.2%
More than 15,000 people	19	31.1%
	61	**100.0%**

Operating Budget

	Number	Percent
Less than $500,000	21	38.9%
Between $500,000 and $1 million	12	22.2%
Between $1 million and $5 million	16	29.6%
More than $5 million	5	9.3%
	54	**100.0%**

Value by Category

Respondents were asked how much they value the following categories of LSTA funding. The percent responding that the category was "Very Valuable" and "Somewhat Valuable" are shown for each category in the table and summarized in the chart.

| Category	Percent Responding "Very Valuable" or "Somewhat Valuable"
Collections/Content	93.8%
Training	87.7%
History and preservation	86.2%
Technical services	72.3%
Youth services	72.3%
Trustee and board consultation	47.7%

Among public libraries, for which it is more relevant, 72.4% of respondents reported that the trustee and board consultation category is "Very Valuable" or "Somewhat Valuable." While still the lowest ranked category for public libraries, this response indicates that the function is important for some.
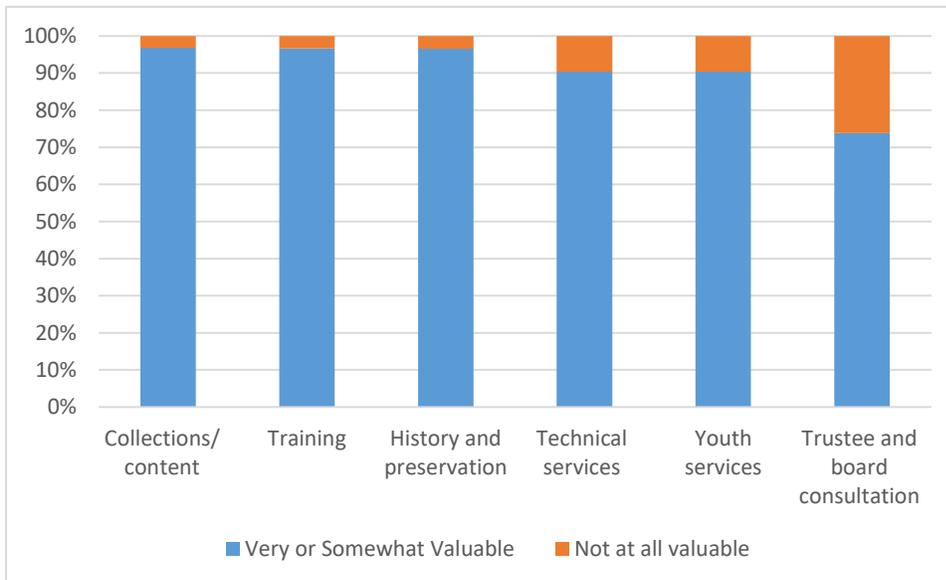
Value by Program

Respondents were asked how much they value the following specific programs funded by LSTA resources. The percent responding that the category was "Very Valuable" and "Somewhat Valuable" are shown for each program in the table below and summarized in the charts.

Program	Percent Responding "Very Valuable" or "Somewhat Valuable"
WTTBL	65.6%
Institutional Library Services	57.8%
Statewide Database Licensing	84.6%
Training for librarians	80.0%
Washington Digital Newspapers	76.9%
Professional Development Grants	75.4%
Digital Literacy	68.8%
IT and broadband support for libraries	66.2%
Youth Services	61.5%
Washington Rural Heritage	60.0%
Ask-WA	59.4%
Washington Anytime Library eBooks consortium	59.4%
Workforce Development	56.3%
Open Data creation, discovery, and reference	42.2%
Digital Public Library of America Support Services	31.3%
Board and trustee consulting and training	30.8%
SimplyE / Palace Project ebook application	9.2%
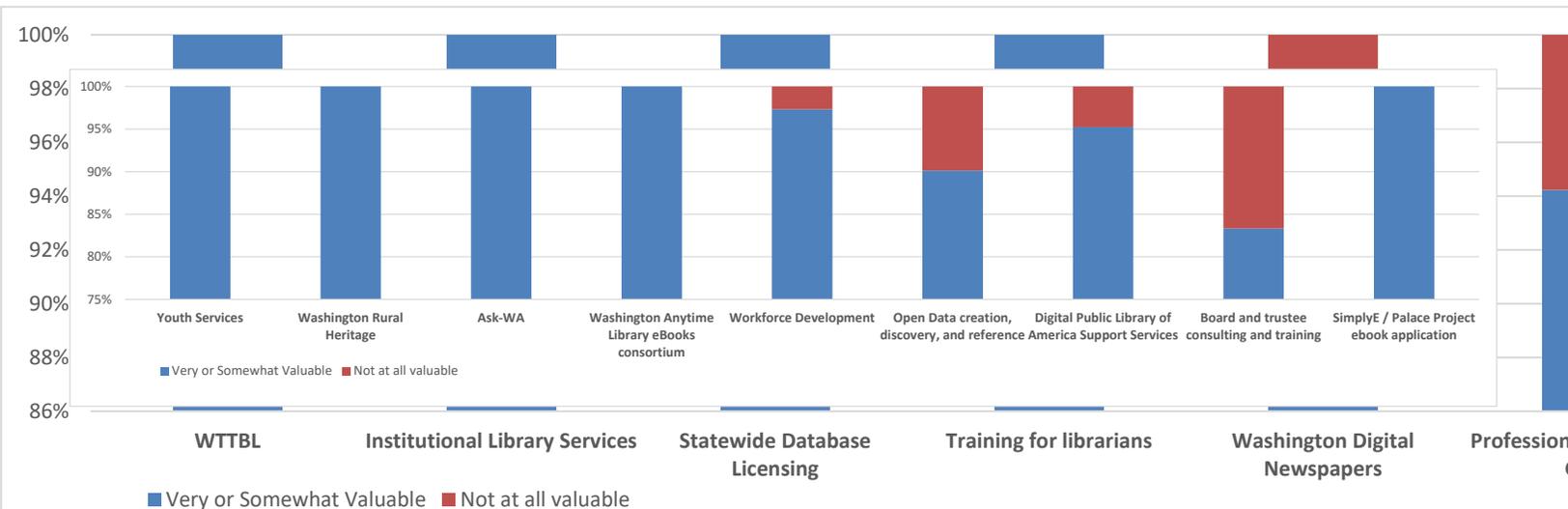
Prioritization of Emergent Needs

Respondents were asked how much would like to prioritize a set of specified emerging needs. The percent responding that item should be a "Strong Priority," or "Somewhat a Priority" are shown in the table below and reflected in the chart.

Item	Percent responding, "Strong Priority" or "Somewhat a Priority"
Digital literacy	95.2%
Workforce development	93.4%
Broadband access	92.1%
Cybersecurity	91.8%
Telehealth	73.8%
Other	54.5%
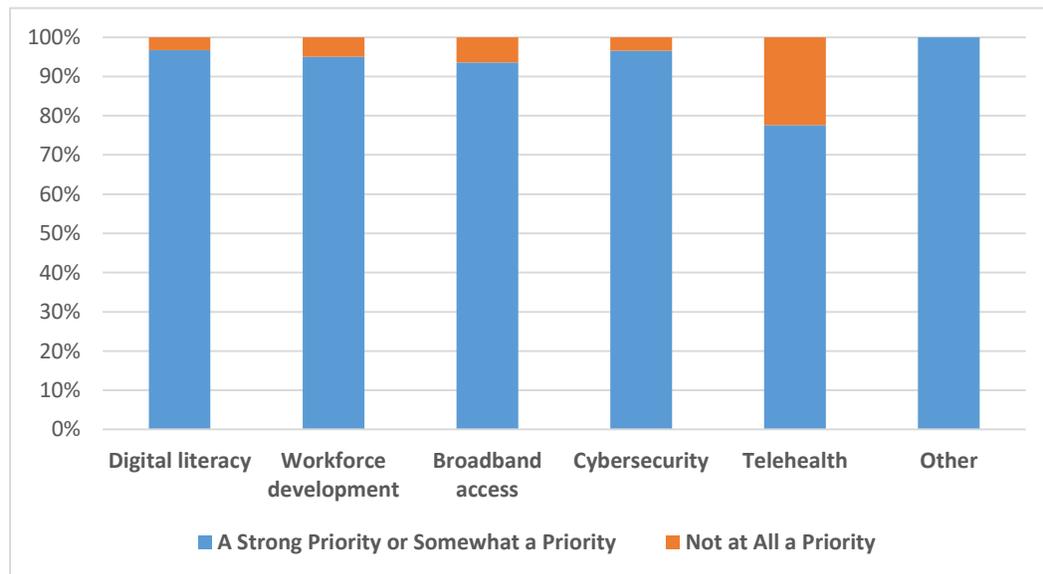
Prioritization of Specific Groups

Respondents were asked how much would like to prioritize a set of specified groups. The percent responding that group should be a "Strong Priority," or "Somewhat a Priority" are shown in the table below and reflected in the chart.

Item	Percent responding, "Strong Priority" or "Somewhat a Priority"
Seniors	92.1%
Underserved populations	92.1%
Youth	91.9%
"New	90.3%
immigrants"	81.0%
Homeless	36.4%
Other	92.1%
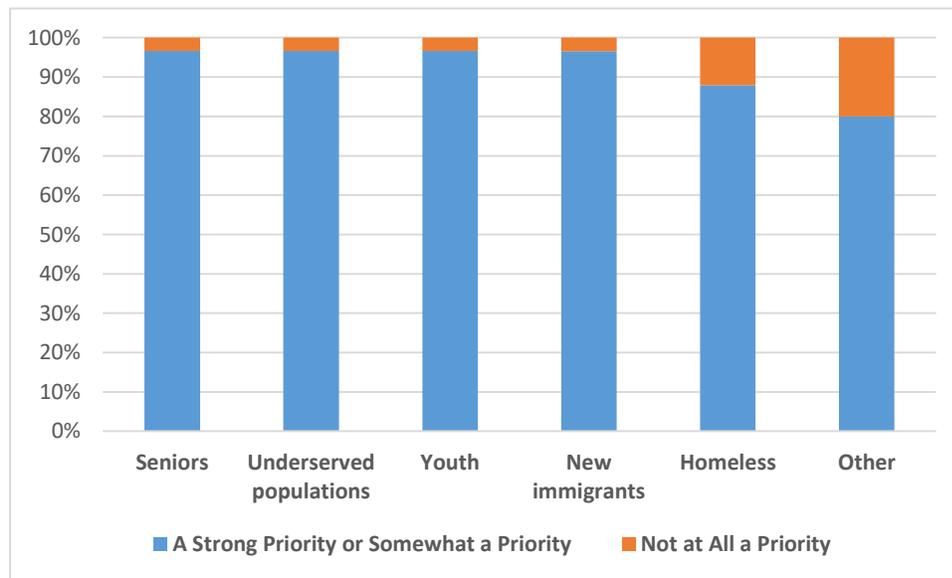
Appendix C: Stakeholder Groups and Guide

BERK staff conducted six facilitated online discussion groups in March 2022. Participants of similar libraries were brought together to facilitate open discussion:

- Large public libraries
- Small public libraries
- Academic libraries
- Tribal libraries
- School libraries
- Other libraries

Library	Attendees
Tribal Libraries	
Yakama Nation Library	Merida Kipp
Northwest Indian College	Valerie McBeth
Jamestown S'Klallam	Bonnie Roos
Large Public Libraries	
Spokane Library	Andrew Chase, ED
KCLS Library	Lisa Rosenblum
Sno-Isle Library	Lois Langer Thompson
Fort Vancouver Library	Sam Wallin
Seattle Public Library	Tom Fay
Small Public Libraries	
Reardan Library	Suzanne Schultz
Academic Libraries	
Seattle Central College	Lynn Kanne
Lake Washington Technical College	Greg Bem
School Libraries	
Dearborn Park International Elementary School	Craig Seasholes
Washougal High School	Hillary Marshall
Other	
Kitsap Regional Library	Lucretia Robertson
Seattle Public Library	Kirk Blankenship

The interview guide is shown on the following pages and interview findings are interwoven through the body of this evaluation.

Washington State Library

LSTA Evaluation and Strategic Plan Discussion Group Protocol | March 1, 2022

Background

The Washington State Library is evaluating its Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan from 2018-2022 and preparing for the next Five-Year Plan. **As part of the evaluation and strategic plan effort, we are engaging with library staff from around the state.**

Structure

We are convening multiple discussion groups with libraries representing large and small public libraries, academic libraries, and Tribal libraries. While each library serves different communities and has unique resources, it is important we hear from you about previous investments and how LSTA dollars should be focused in the future.

These will be interactive listening and sharing sessions where we will explore the questions listed below. Input from these interviews will be summarized at an aggregate level and comments will not be associated with individuals.

Questions

Introductions

1. What library do you represent and how long have you served that community?

Evaluation of Current Funding (2018-2022 funding round)

2. Broadly speaking, LSTA funds supported programs in the following categories:

- Collections/content (including e-book purchasing support and statewide database licensing) purchasing/consortium

- History and preservation (such digitizing historical Washington newspapers, Washington Rural Heritage digitization grant program)

- Technical services (such as broadband, E-rate consulting, cybersecurity training)

- Training (in topics of interest for librarians, such as DEI training, homelessness, trauma, etc.)

- Trustee and board consultation (including resources and training for new directors, board members, and trustees)

- Youth services (such as summer reading programs, teacher-librarian training, assessment)

Let's discuss the following for each of these categories:

- What was most valuable about funding in this area? What impact did it have in your community?

- What was least valuable about funding in this area?

- What suggestions do you have for funding in this category for the coming five years (2023-2027)?

3. Are there any instances where your library used LSTA funds to leverage additional funding? Are there any instances where programs initially supported by LSTA funding have transitioned to core library funding?

Looking Ahead: 2023-2027 Funding

4. Do you have particular interest in funding to support any of the below emerging needs?

- Broadband access
- Telehealth

- Cybersecurity
- Workforce development

- Digital literacy
- Other

5. How much would you like WSL to prioritize programs that serve the following groups?

- Homeless
- Underserved pops

- New immigrants
- Youth

- Seniors
- Other

6. Where are there opportunities for better integration of racial and social equity in WSL's LSTA funded programs?

7. How else can the Washington State Library support you and other libraries, beyond LSTA funding?

Other

8. What other questions/concerns/ideas do you have?

Appendix D: Bibliography of all Documents Reviewed

LSTA Plans, Reports, and Guidelines

- Washington State Library (WSL) Library Services And Technology Act (LSTA) Plan 2018–2022: https://www.sos.wa.gov/_assets/library/libraries/dev/lstafiveyearplan2018-2022.pdf

- Grants to State Library Administrative Agencies. Institute for Museum and Library Services.

- Guidelines for IMLS Grants to States Five-Year Evaluation. Institute of Museum and Library Services. Retrieved at https://www.sos.wa.gov/_assets/library/libraries/dev/IMLSGuidance_LSTAFiveYearEvaluation.pdf

- Tips for Using Your State's Annual Reports for the Five-Year Evaluations with the New State Program Report (SPR). Institute for Museum and Library Services.

- Library Services and Technology Act, Title 20 CFR, Chapter 72, Subchapter II (2014). Retrieved from https://www.imls.gov/assets/1/AssetManager/MLSA_2010_asamended.pdf

Annual Evaluation Reports Submitted to the IMLS

- Washington State Library (2018). Washington State Program Report Summary, Fiscal Year 2017.

- Washington State Library (2019). Washington State Program Report Summary, Fiscal Year 2018.

- Washington State Library (2020). Washington State Program Report Summary, Fiscal Year 2019.

- Washington State Library (2021). Washington State Program Report Summary, Fiscal Year 2020.

- Washington State Library (2022). Washington State Program Report Summary, Fiscal Year 2021.

Research Reports

- "Building Librarian Assessment Confidence through Communities of Research Practice" in the forthcoming book The Community College Library: Assessment which is slated to be published sometime in early March 2022 by ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries).

Grants and Grant Cycles

- 2017-21 Grant Cycle Requests and Rewards. Retrieved from https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/grants/

- LSTA Grant Awards. Retrieved from https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/grants/awards.aspx

- Washington Rural Heritage. 2015 Grant Summary. Retrieved from https://washstatelib.libguides.com/washington_digital_heritage_grants/home#:~:text=The%202021%2D20 22%20Washington%20Digital,through%206%2F30%2F2022.

LSTA-Related Documents, Budgets, and Reports

- LSTA Expenditures by Project Name and LSTA Award for Award Years 2017-21.

- LSTA Expenditures 2017-21.

- LSTA Project Names and Descriptions (2017-21).

Trustee Support

- Website: http://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/libDev/trustees.aspx

- Wiki: Washington Public Library Trustee Wiki

Continuing Education and Training Program

- https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/training/

Digital Inclusion

- https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/projects/digitalliteracy.aspx

First Tuesdays

- Website. Accessed at https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/firsttuesdays/

Institutional Services

- https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/institutionallibraryservices.aspx

Statewide Database Licensing

- https://www.sos.wa.gov/library/libraries/projects/sdl/

Washington Rural Heritage

- https://www.washingtonruralheritage.org/

Washington Talking Book & Braille Library

- https://www.wtbbl.org/