ALABAMA'S LIBRARY SERVICES AND TECHNOLOGY ACT GRANTS TO STATES FIVE-YEAR PLAN (2023-2027)

Submitted by: Alabama Public Library Service
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INTRODUCTION

The Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) authorizes state program grants to state library administrative agencies (SLAAs). The purposes and priorities outlined in the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) are reflected in the Five-Year Plans submitted by each State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA) and in the over 1,500 annual projects that are supported through the Grants to States program. These funds are distributed by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to state and territories for the following purposes and priorities:[1]

Purpose of LSTA (20 U.S.C. § 9121)

1. Enhance coordination among Federal programs that relate to library, education, and information services;
2. Promote continuous improvement in library services in all types of libraries in order to better serve the people of the United States;
3. Facilitate access to resources in all types of libraries for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry;
4. Encourage resource sharing among all types of libraries for the purpose of achieving economical and efficient delivery of library services to the public;
5. Promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning, including by building learning partnerships with school libraries in our Nation's schools, including tribal schools, and developing resources, capabilities, and programs in support of State, tribal, and local efforts to offer a well-rounded educational experience to all students;
6. Enable libraries to develop services that meet the needs of communities throughout the Nation, including people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, individuals with disabilities, residents of rural and urban areas, Native Americans, military families, veterans, and caregivers;
7. Enable libraries to serve as anchor institutions to support community revitalization through enhancing and expanding the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources relating to workforce development, economic and business development, critical thinking skills, health information, digital literacy skills, financial literacy and other types of literacy skills, and new and emerging technology;
8. Enhance the skills of the current library workforce and recruit future professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, to the field of library and information services;
9. Ensure the preservation of knowledge and library collections in all formats and enable libraries to serve their communities during disasters;
10. Enhance the role of libraries within the information infrastructure of the United States in order to support research, education, and innovation;
11. Promote library services that provide users with access to information through national, State, local, regional, and international collaborations and networks; and

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[1] https://www.imls.gov/grants/grants-state/purposes-and-priorities-lsta

12. Encourage, support, and disseminate model programs of library and museum collaboration.

Grants to States (20 U.S.C. § 9141)

1. Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats (including new and emerging technology), in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, economic and business development, health information, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy and other types of literacy skills;
2. Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improved coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. § 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services;
3. (A) Provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services; and (B) Enhance efforts to recruit future professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, to the field of library and information services;
4. Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations;
5. Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;
6. Target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 9902(2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved;
7. Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks; and
8. Carry out other activities consistent with the purposes set forth in 20 U.S.C. § 9121, as described in the State library administrative agency's plan.

This document outlines the FFY 2023-2027 Plan for the Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) to fulfill the requirements of the LSTA program. It summarizes the needs of Alabama libraries and residents as identified in the recently completed evaluation of the APLS Five-Year Plan FFY 2018-2022, and sets forth goals and projects to address those needs.

Alabama libraries eligible to participate in the LSTA programs include:

- Alabama Public Library Service (APLS)
- Public libraries and systems

- State agencies that provide library services to institutionalized persons (i.e. Alabama Department of Youth Services (ALDYS); Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB))
- Academic libraries (in partnership with APLS or a public library)
- School libraries (in partnership with APLS or a public library)
- Special libraries (in partnership with APLS or a public library)

The LSTA Advisory Council provides leadership for Alabama's LSTA program and advises the Director of APLS on LSTA policies, processes, plans, annual programs, and grant evaluation.

MISSION STATEMENT

APLS provides leadership, resources, and programming to support Alabama public libraries in providing quality library services throughout the state. APLS serves more than 220 public libraries in all 67 counties in Alabama.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

APLS has based its LSTA Five Year Plan FFY 2023-2027 on the findings and recommendations derived from the recently completed evaluation of the LSTA Five-Year Plan FFY 2018-2022. The evaluator examined available Public Library Survey (PLS) data, additional data collected and compiled by APLS, and relevant U.S. Census data characterizing the demographics of Alabama's population (Appendix A). The big priorities for the state of Alabama are education and workforce development.

In addition, the evaluator conducted three activities between September 2021 and February 2022 to gather information from stakeholders:

1. Discussions with APLS staff about the information, programming and technology needs of residents of Alabama, and the role of public library services, programs, information resources, and technology in the state.
2. A survey of library staff and library users covering the impact of FFY 2018-2022 programs and activities, and needs for the FFY 2023-2027 Plan. There were 52 responses to the survey conducted online using Alchemer.
3. A series of 14 focus groups conducted via zoom that engaged 227 participants in total across Alabama. Participants included public library users, community leaders, elected and appointed officials, and library staff.

Results of these sources of stakeholder input identified a number of key factors for the Alabama LSTA Five-Year Plan FFY 2023-2027. At a high level, these priorities are:
- Library capacity including services and programs for diverse populations

- Digital collection as well as collections in all formats
- Technology support for information access
- Overcoming barriers to library use and lack of public awareness of libraries including the promotion of partnerships and outreach activities
- Library workforce development to ensure effective libraries to advance the delivery of library and information services

During the period of the Plan, APLS will periodically update its knowledge of library service needs using several methodologies, including:

- Annual collection of needs information from public library directors
- Ongoing collection of public library staff feedback through library consultants' visits and other interaction with library staff
- Surveys and/or interviews annually of public library staff and/or users for selected programs
- Questions embedded in statewide surveys and/or polls conducted by research centers/teams possibly in collaboration with other state agencies if convenient

GOALS OVERVIEW

GOAL 1: Strengthen the capacity, staff expertise and board effectiveness of Alabama public libraries through training, continuing education, and other learning and networking opportunities for library staff and trustees in order to advance the delivery of library and information services.

- ***LSTA Purpose 8 and LSTA Priorities 3a and 3b***

GOAL 2: Support library programs, services, collections and partnerships that promote learning and literacy; serve children, youth, adults and families, including underserved populations; and enhance education, civic engagement, cultural opportunities and economic vitality of Alabama and its residents.

- ***LSTA Priorities 1, 4, 5, and 6***

GOAL 3: Provide information access to all populations through the provision of statewide access to electronic resources and cooperative services, enabling technology, and increased public awareness and use of libraries for information access, knowledge, ideas and cultural heritage.

- ***LSTA Priorities 1, 2, and 7***

These goals are interrelated, all with the intention of creating capable and resourced libraries focused on servicing the information needs of residents of the state.

Strengthening the effectiveness of library staff and boards as outlined in Goal 1 is the foundational priority in executing the Plan and achieving targeted results. Knowledgeable and effective staff are essential to the successful execution of this Plan and for the provision of effective library services. This foundation serves the second priority of effective library programs, services and collections. Effective library programs, services, and collections are the second priority. These are the tools enabling APLS and the state's public library community to serve the wide range of needs across the diverse communities in the state. Goal 2 allows each library or group of libraries to identify the needs in their area and to design programs in response to these needs. The range of grant programs specified in Goal 2 shows the approaches libraries have to shape their response to community needs.

The infrastructure and statewide activities outlined in Goal 3 are the third priority of this Plan. The projects in this goal provide a wide reach and impact, as well as economies of scale that support the statewide mission of APLS and the purposes and priorities of IMLS. While this Plan places strong emphasis on empowering and resourcing individuals and groups of libraries through the first two goals, the final goal services to link individual libraries together in a way that increases the strength of all libraries.

Under the Plan, APLS will use federal funds for statewide programs such as Interlibrary Loan (ILL), online homework help, online learning tools for Alabama workers, library workforce training, and a summer library program for all ages. Of equal importance, APLS will award grants to public libraries and state institutions that offer library services equivalent to those of public libraries such as the Alabama Department for Youth Service (ALDYS) and the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind (AIDB). Grants may be used for a number of library-related projects including collections development, technology, digital literacy, and educational programs for people of all ages. In addition, APLS will use 4% of the state's allotment to support administration of the program, including costs of convening meetings of the LSTA Advisory Council, periodic regional meetings, and similar convenings; costs associated with program administration such as printing, postage, and supplies; costs associated with the training to support implementation of LSTA; APLS staff travel costs for various LSTA statewide, regional, and national activities; and engagement of an outside evaluator to conduct the evaluation of the LSTA program as required by IMLS.

GOALS

GOAL 1*: Strengthen the capacity, staff expertise and board effectiveness of Alabama public libraries through training, continuing education, and other learning and networking opportunities for library staff and trustees in order to advance the delivery of library and information services.*

LSTA Purposes 8 and LSTA Priorities 3a and 3b

IMLS Purposes and Priorities addressed by Goal 1 (Numbering from IMLS)
- LSTA Purpose 8: Enhance the skills of the current library workforce and recruit future professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, to the field of library and information services;
- LSTA Priorities 3a and 3b: (A) Provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services; and (B) Enhance efforts to recruit future professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, to the field of library and information services;

Primary IMLS Measuring Success Focal Area for Goal 1: Institutional Capacity
- IMLS Primary Measuring Success Intents
  - Improve the library workforce

Needs addressed:

- Over 60% of Alabama public libraries are led by a director without an MLS/MLIS degree. There is a need for basic library education for increasing the overall number of degreed librarians in the state, while balancing the needs of those requiring more advanced continuing education programs.
- Over 20% of Alabama public libraries have a single staff member; 35% are open fewer than 40 hours a week (this is five percentage points higher than five years ago); 59% serve populations of less than 10,000 people (this is four percentage points higher than five years ago). There is a need for networking among isolated staff and for building knowledgeable trustees.
- The most frequent response from all sizes of libraries was to meet the need for more continuing education across a range of topics.

In response, APLS plans an LSTA-supported range of programs focused on enabling Alabama public libraries to provide information access, programming and services.

Focal Area - Institutional Capacity
Intent - Improve the Library Workforce
Project 1.1 Professional Development
Ensure library effectiveness through knowledgeable staff and trustees, developed with a program of continuing education and training.

Focal Area - Institutional Capacity
Intent - Improve the Library Workforce
Project 1.2 Professional Networking
Ensure library effectiveness through public library staff and trustee networking, sharing of successes and best practices, and APLS communications and discussions.

Focal Area - Institutional Capacity
Intent - Improve the Library Workforce
Project 1.3 MLS/MLIS grants
Provide competitive grants for public library staff to pursue MLS/MLIS degrees.

Goal 1 Intended Outcomes	Data Sources	Targets
Percent of library staff members who have participated in learning opportunities who indicate that they have knowledge needed for effective libraries, and percent of library administrators who indicate that communications, sharing and networking has contributed to effective libraries.	Post-training evaluation of library staff including rating of knowledge level, rating of impact of learning opportunities and communications, and soliciting input for future continuing education and communications programs. Training evaluations completed by board members at completion of training sessions.	A survey of libraries will be conducted in FY 2023 to gauge current levels of quality of service, impact of growth in expertise, and knowledge. Subsequently it will be repeated in FY 2025l aiming at maintaining the baseline and improvements. The survey will ask about the quality of services in each library.
Number of grants awarded for MLS/MLIS education, and the number of graduates serving in Alabama public libraries.	Grant applications and tracking of awardees and graduates.	A minimum of five grants will be awarded on average per year, dependent on application levels. Recipients will complete MLS/MLIS degree within five years. 100% of graduates will be employed in an Alabama public library for 24 months of the three years following graduation.

GOAL 2*: Support library programs, services, collections and partnerships that promote learning and literacy; serve children, youth, adults and families, including underserved populations; and enhance education, civic engagement, cultural opportunities and economic vitality of Alabama and its residents.*

LSTA Purposes 5, 6, 7, and 9 and LSTA Priorities 1, 4, 5, and 6

IMLS Purposes and Priorities addressed by Goal 2 (Numbering from IMLS):

Purpose 5: Promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning, including by building learning partnerships with school libraries in our Nation's schools, including tribal schools, and developing resources, capabilities, and programs in support of State, tribal, and local efforts to offer a well-rounded educational experience to all students;

Purpose 6: Enable libraries to develop services that meet the needs of communities throughout the Nation, including people of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, individuals with disabilities, residents of rural and urban areas, Native Americans, military families, veterans, and caregivers;

Purpose 7: Enable libraries to serve as anchor institutions to support community revitalization through enhancing and expanding the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources relating to workforce development, economic and business development, critical thinking skills, health information, digital literacy skills, financial literacy and other types of literacy skills, and new and emerging technology;

Purpose 9: Ensure the preservation of knowledge and library collections in all formats and enable libraries to serve their communities during disasters;

Priority 1: Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats (including new and emerging technology), in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, economic and business development, health information, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy and other types of literacy skills;

Priority 4: Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations;

Priority 5: Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;

Priority 6: Target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with section 9902(2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved;

Primary IMLS Measuring Success Focal Area for Goal 2: Lifelong Learning
- IMLS Primary Measuring Success Intents
  - Improve users' formal education
  - Improve users' general knowledge and skills

Needs addressed:

- Alabama demographics support the need for information access, programming and services for a variety of constituencies. (Appendix A includes a summary of Alabama demographics. Note that the percentage of families and individuals in all age groups living in poverty exceeds national averages. The percentage of veterans and individuals with disabilities exceeds the national average. Education attainment is lower than national averages for both high school and college degrees).
- Multiple studies document the positive impact of summer library programs on students' retention of reading skills during the summer vacation; tutoring services especially were very helpful during the pandemic as noted by the evaluation.
- Stakeholder input gathered during focus groups identified the following services as most impactful: book collections and summer library programs, STEM programming, career and employment support, support for education including home schooling.
- Additional topics identified include: health and wellness resources, community engagement, non-traditional library collections, veterans' services, services for refugees and immigrants, services for the elderly, ESL and GED programs, and multicultural and multilingual programming.
- The focus groups included discussions of the reasons many Alabama residents do not use public libraries. Reasons cited include the need for increased programming for some underserved communities (incarcerated and returning residents, immigrants and migrants, bilingual services, veterans), the need for relevant collections and resources, and outreach and education to those having difficulties using libraries including information technology support.
- Stakeholder input gathered through a survey identified the following as "what can APLS do in the next five years": support libraries with programming and services for children, youth, disabled, poor and underprivileged; support for programming addressing literacy, diversity, children and youth; and assistance building local partnership and providing welcoming spaces for programming.

In response, APLS plans an LSTA-supported range of programs focused on enabling Alabama public libraries to provide information access, programming and services.

Focal Area - Lifelong Learning
Intent - Improve users' formal education
Project 2.1 Summer Library Program
Summer Library Program supports activities in libraries that aim at addressing summer learning loss while providing fun and engaging activities for children and youth.

Focal Area - Lifelong Learning
Intent - Improve users' general knowledge and skills
Project 2.2 Grants for Programs, Services, Collections, and Partnerships
Grants for Programs, Services, Collections, and Partnerships
        Potential Activities:
                Children, youth, adults, and families
                Service vehicles
                Services for the disabled
                Difficulty using libraries
                Community awareness and connection
                Collections in libraries
                Digitization of collections
                Technology and equipment
                Small libraries create smart spaces
                Awareness and promotion of APLS databases to state employees

Focal Area - Lifelong Learning
Intent - Improve users' general knowledge and skills
Project 2.3 Blind and Physically Disables Services
Blind and Physically Disabled Services (Alabama Regional Library)
        Potential Activities:
                Outreach (Health fairs and conferences)
                Training (patrons and staff from other agencies)

Goal 2 Intended Outcomes	Data Sources	Targets for Change
Growth in libraries offering summer library programs for children, youth, and adults; increases in number of participants and average number of books read; Positive impact of participants.	Summer library program data reported by libraries; participant satisfaction and service quality survey and/or interviews with selected public libraries.	Summer library program pre-workshop evaluation outcome questions. State agency summer library program evaluation and collection of impact stories.

Goal 2 Intended Outcomes	Data Sources	Targets for Change
Collection of impact data and stories.	Usage, participation, and impact information for grant funded initiatives as collected in the grant application and the SPR.	SPR evaluation data.
Increased awareness, use, and operational effectiveness of Blind and Physically Disabled.	Usage participation and satisfaction survey.	Evaluation survey data; maintaining and improving baseline.

GOAL 3*: Provide information access to all populations through the provision of statewide access to electronic resources and cooperative services, enabling technology, and increased public awareness and use of libraries for information access, knowledge, ideas and cultural heritage.*

LSTA Purposes 8 and 10 and LSTA Priorities 1, 2, and 7

IMLS Purposes and Priorities addressed by Goal 3 (Numbering from IMLS):

Purpose 8: Enhance the skills of the current library workforce and recruit future professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, to the field of library and information services;

Purpose 10: Enhance the role of libraries within the information infrastructure of the United States in order to support research, education, and innovation;

Priority 1: Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats (including new and emerging technology), in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, economic and business development, health information, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy and other types of literacy skills;

Priority 2: Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improved coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. § 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services;

Priority 7: Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks; and

Primary IMLS Measuring Success Focal Area for Goal 3: Information Access
- IMLS Primary Measuring Success Intents
  - Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources

Primary IMLS Measuring Success Focal Area for Goal 3: Institutional Capacity
- IMLS Primary Measuring Success Intents
  - Improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure
  - Improve library operations

Needs addressed:
- Stakeholder input gathered during focus groups indicated the importance of the availability of technology, computers and internet access for fulfillment of information needs. Participants consistently ranked these in the top five services in terms of impact. In many communities, public library computers and internet connections fill a critical gap in access to information for residents.
- The focus groups included discussions of the reasons many do not use public libraries. Reasons cited include misconceptions or lack of awareness of library services and programs, challenges in reaching specific communities, and inadequate technology environments, service hours, and spaces.

Focal Area - Information Access
Intent - Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
Project 3.1 Statewide Electronic Resources and Linkages
Statewide Electronic Resources and Linkages
> Possible activities:
>> E-books
>> Genealogical resources
>> Digital newspaper(s)
>> Additional content resources

Focal Area - Institutional Capacity
Intent - Improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure
Project 3.2 Technology Equipment and Support
Technology Equipment and Support
> Possible activities:
>> Hotspot distribution
>> Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality(AR) technology distribution
>> Digital scanners and related equipment
>> App development and equipment
>> Connectivity upgrades and equipment

Intended Outcomes	Data Sources	Targets for Change
Quality of service and usage of statewide resources will be maintained and/or increased.	Library survey data regarding quality of services (baseline in the first year of the Five-Year Plan); Use data about statewide resources will be collected and reported annually.	Baseline data; maintaining and improving baseline. Repeat library survey in the third year of the Five Year cycle.
Broadband access and related technology	Biennial survey of library bandwidth and hardware.	Maintaining and improving baseline.

COORDINATION EFFORTS

The Plan's narrative organizes all projects for which LSTA funding is anticipated under the IMLS Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents. Additional crosswalk tables displaying these relationships as well as the relationships to LSTA Purposes and Priorities in a graphic format can be found in APPENDIX B.

APLS and the libraries in Alabama are working with the following representative, non-exhaustive, list of partners in the implementation of LSTA projects:
- Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE)
- Alabama Community College System (ACCS)
- Alabama Council of the Blind (ACB)
- Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (ADECE)
- Alabama Department of Human Resources (ADHR)
- Alabama Department of Labor (ADOL)
- Alabama Department of Mental Health (ADMH)
- Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH)
- Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS)
- Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs (ADVA)
- Alabama Humanities Alliance (AHA)
- Alabama Institute for Deaf and Blind (AIDB)
- Alabama Library Association (ALLA)
- Alabama State Department of Education (ASDE)
- Alabama Supercomputer Authority (ASA)
- Alabama Tourism Department
- American Library Association (ALA)
- Association for Rural & Small Libraries (ARSL)
- Chief Officers of State Library Agencies (COSLA)
- Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP)
- Governor's Office on Disability (GOOD)
- National Federation of the Blind (NFB)
- National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS)

- Network of Alabama Academic Libraries (NAAL)
- Public Library Association (PLA)
- University of Alabama School of Library and Information Studies (SLIS)
- Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

EVALUATION PLAN

APLS will use a variety of methodologies to evaluate the success of the projects in meeting the goals of the LSTA Five-Year Plan FFY 2023-2027. These include ongoing evaluation throughout the period of the Plan:

- Surveys (paper and web-based) and/or interviews upon completion of projects: summer **library programs** and grant funded projects.
- Surveys (paper and web-based) and/or discussions at library administrator meetings annually to determine outcomes and effectiveness of projects related to training, library development and IT consulting and support and communications.
- Project reports from grantees upon program completion, to include outcomes based on expectations set in applications. State Program Reports (SPR) will be completed and submitted to IMLS every year.
- Town hall meetings half way through the period of the Plan to assess progress towards goals and outcomes, and to make midcourse adjustments. Participants in these meetings will include library users, community leaders, elected and appointed officials, and library staff.
- Questions embedded in statewide surveys and/or polls conducted by external evaluators (research centers/teams possibly in collaboration with other state agencies if convenient).
- Collections and analysis of PLS data and other data identified by APLS staff.

In addition, APLS will engage an outside evaluator to conduct an assessment of the completed Plan as required by IMLS. Included in this evaluation will be an examination of data and evaluations conducted throughout the period of the Plan, stakeholder input activities to be determined by the evaluator, and discussions with APLS staff and leadership, and LSTA Advisory Council, and key partners.

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The ***Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States Five-Year Plan (2023-2027)*** is based on extensive input from the library community, from independent evaluators, and from other stakeholders. This includes information and data gathered through individual interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

In May of 2021, APLS issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a "Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan Evaluation 2018-2022." QualityMetrics LLC, headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, was selected to carry out the evaluation of the LSTA plan. The assessment of APLS' efforts in carrying out the 2028-2022 Plan was conducted by QualityMetrics Chief Executive Officer Dr. Martha Kyrillidou assisted by associate researcher William Wilson. The process used in the assessment included both retrospective and prospective components and gathered valuable information both for the evaluation and for the subsequent planning process. Interviews, focus groups, and a web-based survey were conducted in addition to an extensive review of State Program Report (SPR) data.

QualityMetrics was subsequently engaged to facilitate APLS' LSTA planning process. A review of the evidence with a focus on prospective changes was conducted. Frequent Zoom sessions were conducted by QualityMetrics that involved APLS' State Librarian, the LSTA Coordinator, and Library Development. Input on the evaluation and the plan was sought from the LSTA Advisory Council as well. The resulting plan was formed based on the input received, analyzed, and synthesized.

COMMUNICATION AND PUBLIC AVAILABILITY

Once the *Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States Five-Year Plan (2023-2027)* has been approved by IMLS, APLS will post the Plan on the agency website where it will remain throughout the duration of its implementation. APLS leadership will present the Plan to agency staff and preparation for the implementation of the Plan will commence.

The Plan's goals may be amended if such an alteration is dictated by community needs. Budgets, specific activities, and anticipated products and services may also be adjusted based on APLS capacity to carry out the Plan as proposed. However, any substantive revisions to the Plan will be submitted to IMLS in accordance with IMLS guidelines and the provisions of the Museum and Library Services Act. APLS will publicize the achievement of significant milestones identified in the Plan as well as ongoing results of its efforts. APLS will also comply with reporting requirements through the SPR. Finally, both achievements and shortcomings will be shared with stakeholders within the state as part of an ongoing effort to improve performance and to increase the positive impact of projects and activities.

MONITORING

The implementation of Alabama's *Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States Five-Year Plan (2023-2027)* will be monitored on a continuous basis. Appropriate APLS staff will be assigned to track the execution of all aspects of the Plan. Specific staff will be

tasked with preparing and generating relevant reports as required as well as to inform decision making. A component of this tracking will be the monitoring of any sub-grant projects that are funded with LSTA dollars. Sub-grantees will be required to submit final reports on the status and results of each project. This will be supplemented with a combination of on-site monitoring visits, phone calls, emails, and other virtual contact.

All projects, including any sub-grant projects as well as those directly administered by APLS, will be monitored on a regular basis as ongoing activities are conducted, documented, and measured. Information and data collected as part of this process will be used to inform APLS' reporting to IMLS in the annual SPR.

Monitoring will comply with the requirements and procedures outlined in 2 CFR 200.327-332
- 2 CFR 200.327 - Financial Reporting
- 2 CFR 200.328 - Monitoring and Reporting Program Performance
- 2 CFR 200.329 - Reporting on Real Property
- 2 CFR 200.330 - Subrecipient and Contractor Determination
- 2 CFR 200.331 - Requirements for Pass-Through Entities
- 2 CFR 200.332 - Fixed Amount Subawards

APPENDIX A: DEMOGRAPHICS

Report on Alabama's Changing Population
Preface on Data Used
Most of the data used in this report is from the U.S. Census; other sources are cited where used. The census data used for the overview section includes data from the decennial census, both the 2020 redistricting data and the 2010 decennial data. Any data cited from 2020, both in the overview and what makes up the majority of the data in the rest of this report, is from the 2020 5-year (2016-2020) American Community Survey (ACS), which includes a greater number of topics than that found in decennial census data. 2015 comparisons for this data are from the 2011-2015 ACS. The highly rural nature of many Alabama counties means that the 5-year ACS estimates had to be used, rather than the 1-year estimates (which are only available for areas with populations over 65,000).

Alabama Libraries
The Alabama Public Library Service (APLS) is a state agency that serves **public libraries** in the 67 counties in Alabama.[2] Alabama has a total of **225** public libraries employing 763.18 FTE librarians based on the 2019 PLS survey. Furthermore, according to the National Center for Educational Statistics' (NCES) Elementary/Secondary Information System (ElSi), Alabama public schools employ 1,305.34 librarians/media specialists.

Public Library Outlets by Locale
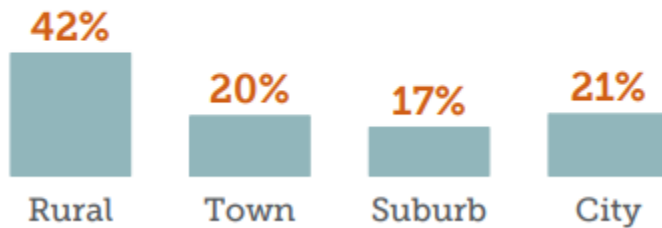
Overview: Population Growth and Demographic Shifts
Alabama was ranked 27th out of the 50 states between 2010-2020 in terms of population growth and that growth has remained relatively stable in the past few years. Overall, growth in Alabama in 2020 and several recent years has been increasingly driven by net migration (gross "in migration" minus gross "out migration," or people moving into and out of an area). In 2020, net migration was responsible for 80% of the population growth in Alabama, an amount that is

[2] The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. Functions and Roles of State Libraries: 2000 and 2020. Washington, DC: The Institute of Museum and Library Services.

continuing to increase while the natural increase slowly declines. Indeed, net migration from 2010-2019 was a total of 53,493, of which twelve thousand of which came in 2020 alone. Moreover, this increase in net migration in the past few years is largely being driven by an increasing amount of domestic migration, while international migration has been steadily falling albeit still positive.

In Alabama, Baldwin County saw the highest growth over the 2010-2019 decade with an astounding 27.16% population growth over this past decade. College towns and metropolitan areas make up the next biggest counties, this includes Lee County (24.24%), Limestone County (25.11%), Tuscaloosa County (16.63%), and Madison County (16.63%). Urban growth was particularly strong over the past decade and will continue to do so in the future.

In contrast, a total of 40 counties saw a population decline over the past decade, with Perry County losing 19.64% of its population. People moving away (out migration) accounted for the most population change in the counties that saw a decline.

Migration and Increased Diversity

As many areas in Alabama grow, particularly through people moving in (net migration), the population is also diversifying; 122.47% of statewide growth over the past decade is due to increases in non-white **populations**.[3] That is, people moving into Alabama tend to be more racially and ethnically diverse than current residents. The groups showing the fastest growth since 2010 are Asian, Two or More Races, and American Indian/Alaskan Native, in that order. Though the last group is largely insignificant from an absolute number standpoint as it makes up less than 0.6% of the population. Black or African American saw a 3.6% population growth coming in at +44,851 people, while Non-Hispanic White saw a 1.7% decline in population coming at -54,942 people.

Currently 35.9% of Alabama identifies as other than non-Hispanic White, making it the 15th most racially and ethnically diverse state in the **United States** (World Population Review). This number has been slowly increasing for decades and by 2060 it is expected that Alabama will become a majority-minority state. The Hispanic or Latino populations account for 5.3%, or **one** in every 19 people in Alabama.

When including Hispanic and non-Hispanic populations in racial categories, the largest group of non-white **Alabamians** are Black **or African American** (25.80%), Some other race alone and Two or More Races (7.85%), and **Asian** (1.53%).

By County, Greene County has the largest Black **or African American** (80.8%) population. Washington County has the largest American Indian Alaskan Native (7.24%). Lee County has the largest Asian (4.92%) population. Franklin County has the largest Some other race alone

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[3] https://www.imls.gov/data/data-catalog/public-libraries-survey/fy-2017-pls-state-profiles

(13.37%) population. Winston county has the highest concentration of White, non-Hispanic individuals (92.44%). All of this **was** taken from 2020 census data.

Age and Race

The national trend of aging Baby Boomers has also contributed to an aging population in Alabama. When it comes to the national average, Alabama is the 20th oldest in having 17.8% of its population above 65 years of age. The median age was 37.5 in 2010, and in 2020 that number is now 39.2. The trend is a growing one as Alabama's natural births have slowly been declining. Though for Alabama, net migration of primarily younger and working adults has helped slow that down which many other states do not have. The following heat table shows the aging population over the past decade.

AGE	% Total 2010	% Total 2015	% Total 2020
Under 5 years	6.4	6.1	6
5 to 9 years	6.6	6.3	6
10 to 14 years	6.7	6.6	6.4
15 to 19 years	7.3	6.7	6.6
20 to 24 years	7	7.2	6.6
25 to 29 years	6.5	6.5	6.8
30 to 34 years	6.1	6.4	6.3
35 to 39 years	6.6	6.1	6.2
40 to 44 years	6.9	6.5	6
45 to 49 years	7.4	6.6	6.3
50 to 54 years	7.2	7.1	6.5
55 to 59 years	6.4	6.8	6.8
60 to 64 years	5.4	6.2	6.6
65 to 69 years	4.2	5	5.6
70 to 74 years	3.3	3.6	4.4
75 to 79 years	2.6	2.7	3
80 to 84 years	1.9	1.9	2.1
85 years and over	1.6	1.7	1.8

- Table: Population Change, Race & HLO
- Table: Age and Sex

Alabama Counties: 2020 Population and % Change 2010-2020
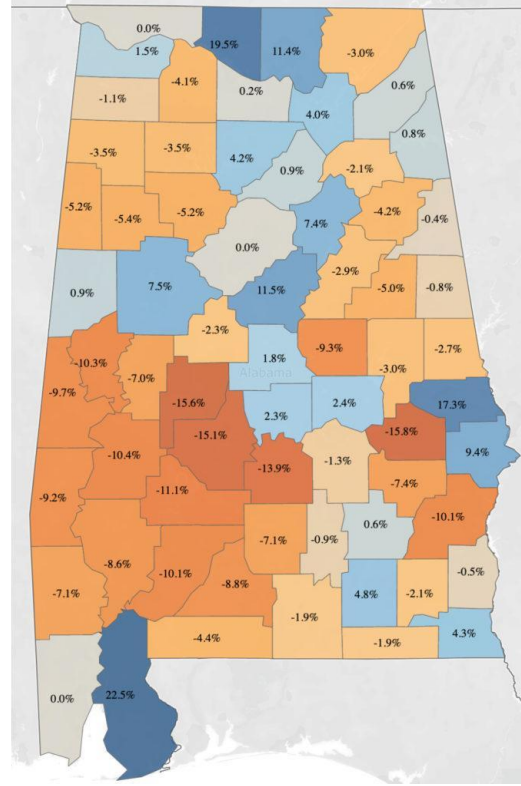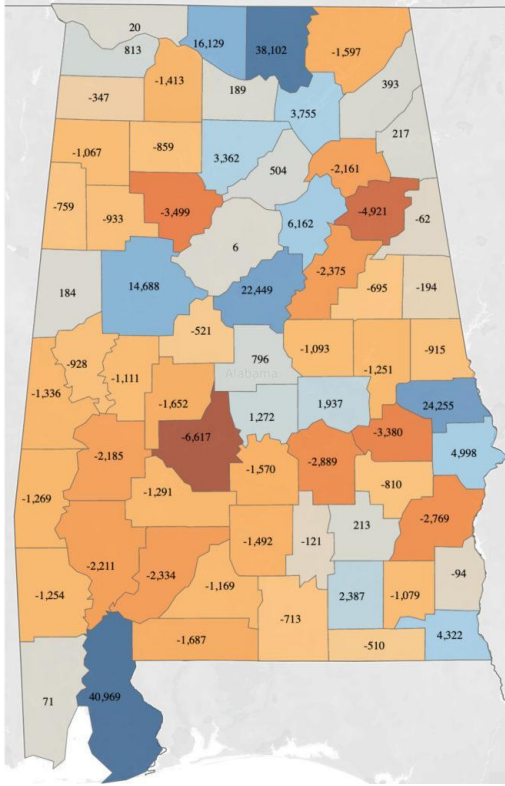
Population Change 2010-2019. (PARCA/YHN/Univ. of Alabama)

Background & Language

Alabama has a relatively high percentage of people speaking English as their primary language spoken at home at 95%. The more surprising part is how unlike many other states, these numbers have effectively remained the same over the past decade. In 2020, 4.96% of **Alabama** adults (citizens 18+) spoke a language other than English at home, with 2.91% speaking Spanish. In the past **five** years, this has actually declined, as in 2015, 5.01% of adults (**residents** 18+) spoke a language other than English, and 3.03% spoke Spanish. Among children 5-17, 6.82% spoke a language other than English at home in 2020. Compare this to the 2015 number of 6.02% and you'll see that more younger people are speaking a language **other than English** at home now. All of this has led to a language rate that has remained the same.

Slightly fewer than **four** in 100 **Alabamians** (3.43%) were born outside the United States. Of those, nearly half (48.6%) were born in Latin America and about a third (32.6%) were born in Asia. Two in five foreign-born **Alabamians** (39.8%) are naturalized citizens. The largest age group among the foreign-born are aged 24-44 (42.5%). Foreign-born **Alabamians** are less likely to be white than those born in the United States. Only 38.2% identified as White and a smaller 17.5% identified as white, not Hispanic or Latino. Nearly half of foreign-born **Alabamians** identify as Hispanic or Latino (44.6%); a bit over a quarter identify as Asian (28.6%). The remainder, in descending order, identify as Some other race alone (19.2%), Black **or African American** (7.2%), Two or More Races (5.4%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (1.3%), and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.

Foreign-born **Alabamians** are more likely than the overall population to participate in the labor force, at 65.1% labor participation rate compared to the statewide rate of 57.2%. Conversely, the unemployment rate for foreign-born **Alabamians** is lower, at 2.2% compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 3.2%. The manufacturing industry employs the most foreign-born **Alabamians** (19.3%), then **educational** services, and health care and social assistance (17.8%). **Statewide**, **education**, healthcare and social assistance is the biggest employer (22.9%), and manufacturing is second at 14%. Concerning education attainment, foreign-born **Alabamians** can be listed perfectly in descending order with less than high school graduates (28.5%), high school graduates / equivalents (21.8%), some college or associate's degree (18%), a bachelor's degree (16.3%), and a Graduate or Professional degree (15.3%). Fewer foreign-born **Alabamians** speak English at home (21.3% compared to 97.5% statewide)

- Table: <u>Foreign-born population</u>
- Table: <u>Language spoken at home</u>
- Table: <u>Labor force & unemployment</u>

Home Internet & Computer Access

Statewide, 84 in 100 households (83.9%) have broadband internet access; this percentage is higher for Asian (94%) and white households (86.4%). Broadband at home is least common among Some other race (73.9%) and Black or African American (77.1%). The highest percentage without home internet access but with a computer was for Some other race (14.7%) followed by Black or African American (10.9%). The lowest percentage was Asian households (3.5%), then American Indian and Alaska Native (5.7%), then White alone, not Hispanic or Latino (6.3%). Although 8% of all **Alabamians** have no computer at home, no specific group is above 11.6% (Black or African American). This is followed by Some other race alone at 10.90%. The lowest percentages without a home computer were households or Asian alone (2.30%) and Two or more races (4.50%).

Monroe and Perry County show considerable difference from all other counties with regards to home computer and internet access. Only 53.2% and 55.1% of all households in Monroe and Perry County have broadband access, 17.6% and 10.2% of homes have no internet access but a computer, and 28.8% and 34.1% of homes don't have a computer. Both of these counties have considerably low populations in more rural areas which makes these numbers more understandable.

- Table: <u>Household broadband & households without computers</u>

Education

Alabama's rate of education attainment is slightly lower statewide than for the United States, for both high school and college. Roughly 87 in 100 (86.9%) of **Alabamians** graduate high school

compared to 88.5% in the United States, and 26.2% of **Alabamians** ages 25 and above have earned a bachelor's degree or higher (32.9% in the United States).

Following this pattern, for all racial and ethnic groups aside from Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, **Alabamians** have a similar or lower percentage of "high school graduate or higher" compared to the United States. More than **nine** in 10 **Alabamians** are high school graduates or higher for Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander (92.2%), White alone, not Hispanic or Latino (89%), Asian (86.8%), Black **or African American** (83.9%)**,** and Two or more races (83.4%). The bottom three groups which fall under 80% are American Indian or Alaskan Native (78.7%), Hispanic or Latino (64.3%) and Some other race alone (58.4%).

There is a greater variance between groups for attaining a bachelor's degree or higher. The highest percentage by far is Asian at 51.3%. Next are White alone, not Hispanic or Latino (29%), Two or more races (27.5%), and Black **or African American** (18.4%). The remaining groups are American Indian or Alaska Native (17.8%), Hispanic or Latino (17%), Native **Hawaiian** and Other Pacific Islander (14.1%) and Some other race alone (12%). Although rates of "high school graduate or higher" are lower for **Alabamians** compared to the same racial and ethnic categories in the United States overall, when looking at age groups the picture is a bit different. Specifically, the 18-24 age group puts Alabama above the United States average in all categories except Bachelor's. That is, the Alabama high school graduate rate is 34% for people aged 18 to 24 (compared to 32.1% **United States** average).

There is good news as Alabama is trending in the right direction; over the past five years, the percentage of high school graduates in Alabama has risen from 84.3% in 2015 to 86.9% in 2020. It is currently the highest it has been according to the ACS Census Data and it has risen every year over the past **five** years as well.

- Table: <u>Educational attainment by race/ethnicity</u>

Income, Poverty Levels, & Employment
The U.S. Census tracks both individual income and household (family or non-family) income. Statewide, 2020 median individual earnings for employed civilians (16+) in Alabama was $35,051 (2020 **five**-year ACS). Women's earnings as a percentage of men's was 68.1%. By occupation, median earnings were highest for management, business, science, and art occupations ($53,240) and lowest for service occupations ($18,717). By industry, the biggest sector of employment was educational services, and healthcare and social assistance (480,244 people) and lowest in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (29,921 people). Women's earnings as a percent of men's lags most in sales and office occupations (65.2%) with a close second to management, business, science, and arts occupations (65.3%). The sub-categories driving this for both of these fields are legal occupations (41.8%), health diagnosing and treating practitioners and other technical occupations (54%) and sales and related occupations (43.3%).

The highest median household income by population group was Asian at $67,083 and the next highest was non-Hispanic White at $60,213. All seven other racial and ethnic groups analyzed fell below the state median household income of $52,035 with the lowest being Black or **African** American at $35,239.

For the population over age 25 with less than a high school diploma, 28.5% fall below the poverty line. Of those employed, 7% were below the poverty level; 34.7% of the unemployed were below the poverty level. By race/ethnicity, Some other race (32.7%), Hispanic or Latino origin (29.2%), Black (25.6%), and Two or more races (21.2%). White alone, not Hispanic/Latino is the group with the smallest percentage in poverty, at 11.2%.

Unemployment is lowest among Asians (2.8%), followed by White (4.3%). The labor force participation rate is highest for Some other race (66.5%), closely followed by Hispanic or Latino origin (65.8%) and Asian (65.4%). Participation in the labor force increases along with educational attainment, from 49.1% for less than high school graduates, 66.3% for high school graduates, 75.4% for some college or associate's degree, and 84.4% for those with a bachelor's degree or higher.

More **Alabamians** are employed in the educational services, health care and social assistance, at 22.65%, more than any other industry category. The industry with the lowest percentage of employment is agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining at 1.41%.
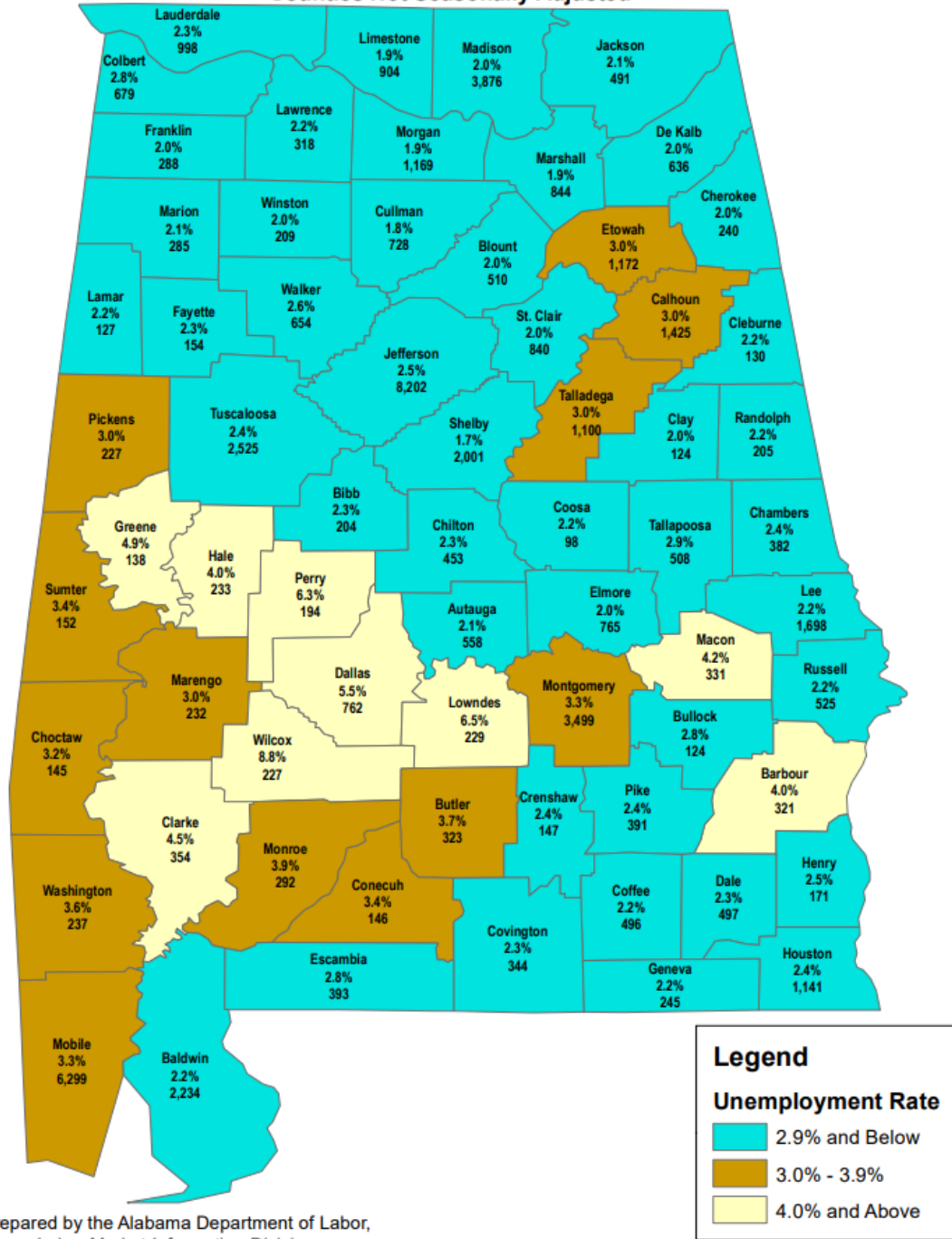
- Table: <u>Median household income</u>
- Table: <u>Occupation and median individual earnings</u>
- Table: <u>Population below poverty level</u>
- Table: <u>Labor force participation and unemployment rates</u>

Top Issue Facing Alabama: Education and Workforce Training
https://cber.culverhouse.ua.edu/2021/08/31/education-and-workforce-training-remain-top-concern-for-alabama/

Alabama
Number Unemployed and Unemployment Rate
March 2022 Preliminary
State Rate Seasonally Adjusted: 2.9%
State Rate Not Seasonally Adjusted: 2.5%
Counties Not Seasonally Adjusted

Lauderdale
2.3%
998

Colbert
2.8%
679

Limestone
1.9%
904

Madison
2.0%
3,876

Jackson
2.1%
491

Lawrence
2.2%
318

Franklin
2.0%
288

Morgan
1.9%
1,169

Marshall
1.9%
844

De Kalb
2.0%
636

Marion
2.1%
285

Winston
2.0%
209

Cullman
1.8%
728

Blount
2.0%
510

Etowah
3.0%
1,172

Cherokee
2.0%
240

Lamar
2.2%
127

Fayette
2.3%
154

Walker
2.6%
654

St. Clair
2.0%
840

Calhoun
3.0%
1,425

Cleburne
2.2%
130

Jefferson
2.5%
8,202

Talladega
3.0%
1,100

Clay
2.0%
124

Randolph
2.2%
205

Pickens
3.0%
227

Tuscaloosa
2.4%
2,525

Shelby
1.7%
2,001

Bibb
2.3%
204

Chilton
2.3%
453

Coosa
2.2%
98

Tallapoosa
2.9%
508

Chambers
2.4%
382

Greene
4.9%
138

Hale
4.0%
233

Perry
6.3%
194

Autauga
2.1%
558

Elmore
2.0%
765

Lee
2.2%
1,698

Sumter
3.4%
152

Macon
4.2%
331

Russell
2.2%
525

Marengo
3.0%
232

Dallas
5.5%
762

Lowndes
6.5%
229

Montgomery
3.3%
3,499

Bullock
2.8%
124

Choctaw
3.2%
145

Wilcox
8.8%
227

Barbour
4.0%
321

Clarke
4.5%
354

Monroe
3.9%
292

Butler
3.7%
323

Crenshaw
2.4%
147

Pike
2.4%
391

Washington
3.6%
237

Conecuh
3.4%
146

Coffee
2.2%
496

Dale
2.3%
497

Henry
2.5%
171

Covington
2.3%
344

Escambia
2.8%
393

Geneva
2.2%
245

Houston
2.4%
1,141

Mobile
3.3%
6,299

Baldwin
2.2%
2,234

Prepared by the Alabama Department of Labor,
Labor Market Information Division

Legend

Unemployment Rate

(teal)	2.9% and Below
(brown)	3.0% - 3.9%
(cream)	4.0% and Above

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APPENDIX B: CROSSWALK

ALABAMA GOAL 1: Strengthen the capacity, staff expertise and board effectiveness of Alabama public libraries through training, continuing education, and other learning and networking opportunities for library staff and trustees in order to advance the delivery of library and information services. **Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents**	1.1 Professional Development	1.2 Professional Networking	1.3 MLIS/MLIS grants		
Lifelong Learning					
Improve users' formal education					
Improve users' general knowledge and skills					
Information Access					
Improve users' ability to discover information resources					
Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources					
Institutional Capacity	YES	YES	YES		
Improve the library workforce	YES	YES	YES		
Improve the library's physical and technological infrastructure					
Improve library operations					
Economic & Employment Development					
Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support					
Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources					
Human Resources					
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family or household finances					
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health & wellness					
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills					
Civic Engagement					
Improve users' ability to participate in their community					
Improve users' ability to participate in community conversations around topics of concern					

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ALABAMA GOAL 2: Support library programs, services, collections and partnerships that promote learning and literacy; serve children, youth, adults and families, including underserved populations; and enhance education, civic engagement, cultural opportunities and economic vitality of Alabama and its residents.

Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents

	2.1 Summer Library Program	2.2 Grants for Programs, Services, Collections, and Partnerships	2.3 Blind and Physically Disabled Services (Alabama Regional Library)
Lifelong Learning	YES	YES	YES
Improve users' formal education	YES		
Improve users' general knowledge and skills		YES	YES
Information Access			
Improve users' ability to discover information resources			
Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources			
Institutional Capacity			
Improve the library workforce			
Improve the library's physical and technological infrastructure			
Improve library operations			
Economic & Employment Development			
Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support			
Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources			
Human Resources			
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family or household finances			
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health & wellness			
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills			
Civic Engagement			
Improve users' ability to participate in their community			
Improve users' ability to participate in community conversations around topics of concern			

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ALABAMA GOAL 3: Provide information access to all populations through the provision of statewide access to electronic resources and cooperative services, enabling technology, and increased public awareness and use of libraries for information access, knowledge, ideas and cultural heritage.

Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents

	Statewide Electronic Resources and Linkages	Technology Equipment and Support			
Lifelong Learning					
Improve users' formal education					
Improve users' general knowledge and skills					
Information Access	YES				
Improve users' ability to discover information resources					
Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources	YES				
Institutional Capacity		YES			
Improve the library workforce					
Improve the library's physical and technological infrastructure		YES			
Improve library operations					
Economic & Employment Development					
Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support					
Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources					
Human Resources					
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family or household finances					
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health & wellness					
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills					
Civic Engagement					
Improve users' ability to participate in their community					
Improve users' ability to participate in community conversations around topics of concern					