

# ILLINOIS

**Long Range Plan for the Use of  
Library Services and Technology Act Funds  
2023 – 2027**



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## Introduction

The Illinois State Library (ISL) is a division of the Illinois Secretary of State. From overseeing the ISL and administering the state's literacy efforts, to issuing driver's licenses, registering vehicles, and promoting organ/tissue donation awareness, the Secretary of State's office directly touches the lives of nearly everyone in Illinois.

The purposes of the ISL are set forth in Illinois Compiled Statutes [[15 ILCS 320/7](#)]. The ISL is the principal information resource for Illinois' state government and serves as the State's library by extending and developing library services for the citizens of Illinois. Reading materials and services to meet the needs of the visually impaired are provided by the Illinois State Library Talking Book and Braille Service.

The ISL administers state and federal grants in support of over 1,700 public, academic, school, and special library agencies throughout Illinois that together comprise the Illinois Library and Information Network (ILLINET). Grant programs develop and expand library services, enhance technology, build and renovate libraries, as well as provide support for the statewide delivery service for library materials. Basic adult literacy instruction is provided through grant programs administered through the ISL's Literacy Office to libraries, businesses, and literacy providers.

In compliance with Illinois statutes and administrative rules, annual certification is required of all library system members in order to retain system membership and eligibility for grants administered by the ISL [[23 Ill. Adm. Code 3030.200](#)]. As of June 2022, ILLINET includes 1,793 certified library agencies, 3 library systems and the ISL:

- 147 academic library agencies with library services provided at 237 locations
- 640 public library agencies with library services provided at 812 locations
- 796 school district library agencies with library services provided at 3,809 locations
- 210 special library agencies with library services provided at 217 locations

### Library Systems:

- Chicago Public Library System: 1 public library serving the City of Chicago.
- Illinois Heartland Library System: 30 academic; 227 public; 236 school; 32 special libraries for a total of 525 members serving southern Illinois.
- Reaching Across Illinois Library System: 117 academic; 412 public; 560 school; 178 special libraries for a total of 1,267 members serving northern Illinois and the nonpublic libraries in the City of Chicago.

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## Mission Statement

The Illinois State Library provides leadership in information access and supports essential and collaborative library and literacy services.

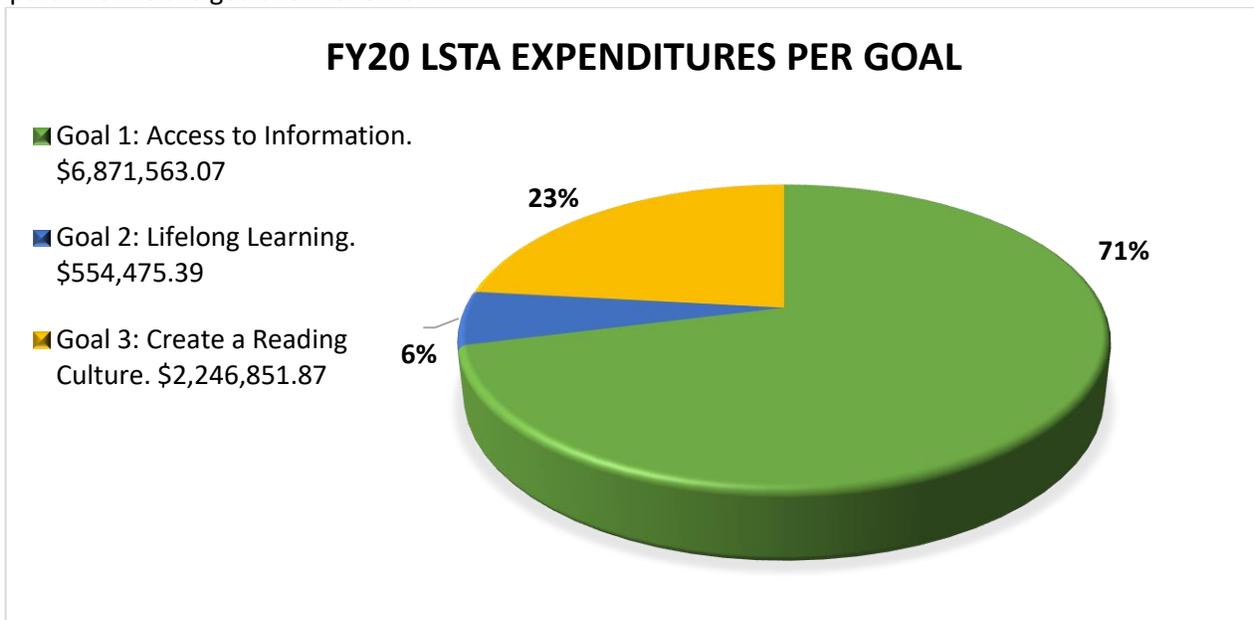
The Illinois State Library envisions a future where everyone is aware of the valuable role of libraries and has timely access to library and information services.

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## Needs Assessment

The ISL conducted a needs assessment process that involved several strategies to gather data, review information and determine priorities as the basis for this long-range plan.

The Institute for Legal, Legislative, and Policy Studies, Center for State Policy and Leadership at the University of Illinois Springfield assessed the 2018 through 2022 use of LSTA funds in Illinois. The evaluator compiled, reviewed, and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data from project reports of all LSTA and match funded activities during the timeframe of the evaluation. ISL staff worked closely with the evaluator over several months in order to provide both the qualitative and quantitative data necessary to get a clear picture of how ISL met the goals laid forth in the 2018-2022 grant period. The evaluation revealed that the ISL successfully achieved the three goals of access to information, lifelong learning, and creating a reading culture, confirming the value of the current services, while providing insights for initiatives to change, develop, or expand within the next five years. The data charted below reflects the FY20 expenditures per goal and gives a relative cross-section of how LSTA grant funds and match funds were distributed based on the three goals of 2018-2022, and in part informs the goals for 2023-2027.



In order to establish and prioritize goals for the use of LSTA funds for the 2023-2027 grant period, input was sought by reviewing the current and past State Program Reports (SPR) and libraries' annual reports; through

conversations with grantees and survey responses from the library workforce across the state of Illinois; through discussions with the Talking Book and Braille Service advisory board; by reviewing publications from state and federal agencies to analyze demographics on the people of Illinois and statewide trends; and through discussions with ISL administration and staff about results and data provided in the evaluation.

The Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) advises the ISL in the development of state and federal library plans; provides input in addressing policies, issues, and activities for library development and cooperation among different types of libraries; makes recommendations concerning the evaluation of statewide services; and addresses the use of technology to expand access to information for the state's citizens. ISLAC will have a continuing role to review projects awarded and progress towards meeting the LSTA goals.

From these information sources, ISL staff determined the three focal points for the 2023-2027 long-range plan goals as:

- Support for access to information and ideas
- Support for opportunities for education, information fluency, and lifelong learning
- Support for innovation

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## **Goal 1: Position the Illinois library community to extend library services for all Illinois residents by providing access to information and ideas.**

Access to information, the number one priority for use of LSTA and match funds, provides the foundation for libraries working together on behalf of the residents of Illinois. This goal is supported by sharing resources, embracing technology, making informed decisions, and providing diverse resources whether digital, virtual or tangible to improve access to the information that library users seek.

**Need:** Illinois residents rely on libraries for a variety of information. In FY2021, Illinois public libraries reported over 19 million visits, averaging 54,767 people using public libraries every day and asking over 4 million reference questions. With over 11,920 questions asked daily, just at public libraries, libraries of all types are in a unique position to provide a balance of resources and services to support inquiring individuals of all ages and abilities.<sup>1</sup> The average number of weeks libraries were open in 2021 was 27. Due to COVID-19, libraries operated at limited capacity by reducing hours or limiting the number of patrons into the building.

Students need seamless access to quality information to develop information literacy skills, and school libraries especially are positioned to fulfill this need. The Illinois Standards Aligned Instruction for Libraries<sup>2</sup> is based on K-12 students having access to information. The first standard deals with the ability of students to: “access information efficiently and effectively to inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.”

- Recognize the need for information.
- Formulate questions based on information needs.
- Identify various potential sources of information.
- Develop and use successful strategies for locating information.
- Seek information from diverse sources.

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<sup>1</sup> Illinois State Library. (2020-2021). Illinois Public Library Annual Report. Retrieved from Counting Opinions.

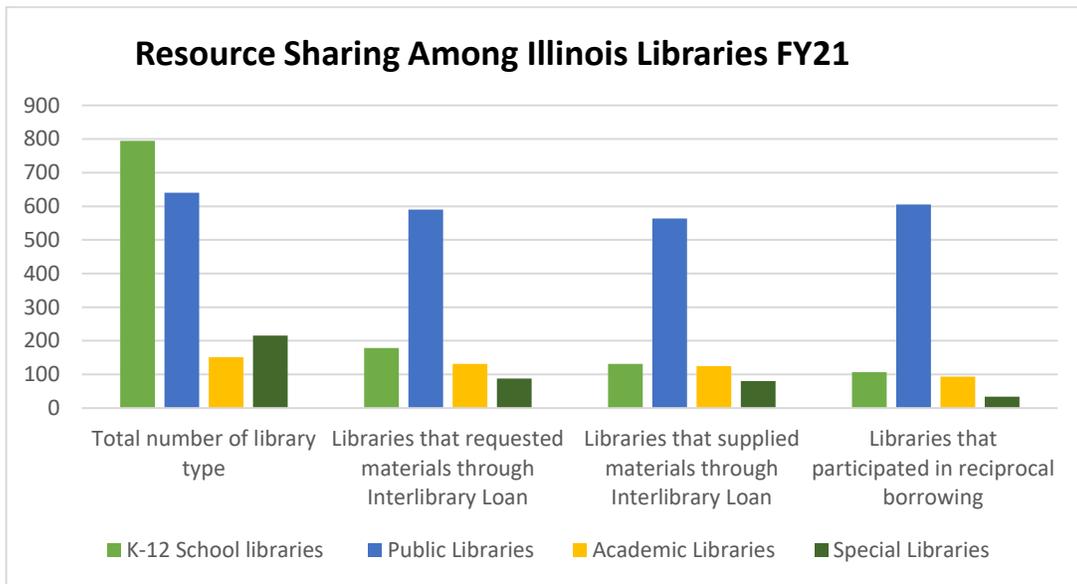
<sup>2</sup> Association of Illinois School Library Educators (AISLE). (2018). Illinois Standards-Aligned Instruction for Libraries. Retrieved from <https://aisled.org/isail/>

Citizens rely on digital libraries for virtual access to resources that would otherwise be locked away and unavailable for use by researchers, students, and the general public. The Illinois Digital Archives (IDA) provides a seamless search tool to both unique historical resources and deposited electronic government documents of all types. In February 2022, there were 745,496 items hosted by IDA, which is a 45% increase since 2017, and 117,572 views of the materials, representing an increase of 68% since 2017. This translates to IDA users viewing over 4,000 items every day.

As documented by the Evaluation of Use of Library Services and Technology Act Funds FY2018 - FY2022<sup>3</sup>:

- Library users across Illinois rely on their library for access to information. During the evaluation period, FirstSearch handled 4.5 million searches. This includes access to WorldCat to discover resources available in libraries’ collections.
- The financial advantage of a statewide delivery network to transport library materials borrowed and loaned on behalf of patrons’ requests was evident as the cost per item averaged .20¢ per item during the evaluation period of 2018 – 2022.

Academic, public, school, and special libraries are actively sharing resources for the benefit of Illinois residents. The FY2021 ILLINET Interlibrary Loan and Reciprocal Borrowing Traffic Survey collected responses from 1,803 libraries of all types, representing 100 percent of the library agencies in Illinois.<sup>4</sup> The interlibrary loan data charted below reflects libraries requesting and loaning materials on behalf of patron requests. Reciprocal borrowing reflects the percent of libraries allowing patrons to check out materials with a library card issued by another library. No one library can possibly own everything; therefore, sharing resources is critical to meet the eclectic needs of Illinois library users.



For Illinois residents to successfully discover the resources available in libraries’ collections, shared automation systems generate better search results from the cleanup of duplicate records, upgrade of less than full level bibliographic records, and identification and resolution of problems created by conflicts between accepted

<sup>3</sup> Simmons, AJ. Ph.D., LaJoie, Sally, MLS (2022). Illinois State Library Evaluation of Use of Library Services and Technology Act Funds FY2018 - FY2022 (Rep.). Retrieved from: [https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/library/grants/pdfs/lsta\\_evaluation.pdf](https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/library/grants/pdfs/lsta_evaluation.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>Interlibrary Loan and Reciprocal Borrowing Statistical Survey FY2021. Retrieved from: <https://il.countingopinions.com/pireports/report.php?2189a086bf94086c064527a238038c6f>

metadata and the shared automation system. Many smaller Illinois libraries of all types lack staff with the expertise to do original cataloging. Additionally, many libraries lack sufficient staff or the time necessary to upgrade bibliographic records or to engage in database cleanup activities. Those libraries with cataloging staff often have a hard time keeping current with the latest cataloging standards and best practices.

The State of Illinois, along with the rest of the world, faced enormous challenges starting in March 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lockdowns, building closures, the need to pivot to virtual and curbside services, staffing shortages, and safety concerns, have all taken an unprecedented toll on libraries, as well as state, regional and local agencies that serve the people of Illinois. Now more than ever, data collection and assessment are necessary to measure progress in meeting goals and make effective decisions to allocate resources and share results with stakeholders.

**LSTA Priorities** supported by the activities under this goal are expected to include:

- Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations, and networks.
  - Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve coordination among and between libraries and entities, for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services.
  - Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.
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## **Projects under Goal 1:**

### **Project 1: Support the efforts of the Illinois library community to share their resources.**

**What will be done/for whom:** The physical transportation of library materials between ILLINET libraries through regional and statewide delivery networks is a vital service to support resource sharing. The delivery load is driven by the interlibrary loaning of materials between libraries to fulfill the needs of library users statewide. Materials are transported between libraries to fulfill library patrons' requests for books, newspapers, magazines, or resources that are not available at their "home" library but are available from other Illinois libraries elsewhere in the state. Support for the delivery of resources between libraries is based on strategic and cost-effective methods.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** Delivery is outsourced or provided as a direct service to ILLINET libraries by sub grant organizations. Every ILLINET library complies with all delivery policies, procedures, and guidelines established by the ISL, the library systems, Illinois Library Delivery System and/or their commercial contractors. ILLINET libraries ensure that appropriate and sufficient interlibrary loan practices are in place and that libraries are in compliance with the components of the most recently adopted ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code. Interlibrary resource sharing across the state of Illinois is supported and encouraged as documented on library agencies' annual certification and the ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Traffic Survey.

**Benefits or Outcomes Expected:** Statewide and regional solutions provide an infrastructure that support sharing resources and access to information for the people of Illinois. The capacity of an individual library to respond to the informational needs of their patrons is improved as resources are borrowed and loaned. Activities improve library operations on behalf of library users across the state.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** As a continuing statewide initiative, LSTA and/or state funded sub grant opportunities will be made available for eligible applicants to develop and support sharing resources between libraries.

**Timeline:** This is a top priority with annual grant opportunities to ensure seamless services 2023 through 2027.

**Project 2: Support the efforts of the Illinois library community to provide content and resources in a variety of formats.**

**What will be done/for whom:** An ongoing, statewide subscription provides access to OCLC WorldCat Discovery/FirstSearch for every ILLINET library in the state. WorldCat Discovery refers to OCLC's enhanced search interface, which provides access via a single portal, to two services: WorldCat and FirstSearch databases. Through WorldCat, users find libraries' descriptive catalog records to request the resource they need plus the location of the owning library whether it is their local library or another library. ILLINET member libraries are provided content to 13 databases through this subscription to the former FirstSearch "base package." Most of these copyrighted resources cannot be found using a simple Google search.

Libraries' resources, whether virtual or tangible, are improved based on the demonstrated needs of users.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** Through a subscription to OCLC WorldCat Discovery/FirstSearch or a similar database suite, the ISL ensures that every ILLINET member academic, public, school and special library has access to a suite of online content. Each library is provided a unique URL and password for use by staff and to provide for their patrons. As part of the subscription, the vendor provides technical support and virtual training directly to libraries.

Libraries may be offered sub grants or other assistance to improve the resources available for the people they serve. Based on local need, resources are added to a library's collection to enhance the library's capacity to meet the needs of their patrons. The bibliographic records of the new materials are made available through a shared catalog to enhance resource sharing.

**Benefits or Outcomes Expected:** Illinois libraries respond to the needs of patrons by providing access to information in a variety of formats. A user's ability to obtain quality information online regardless of where they are located in the state is equalized due to a statewide subscription. Through WorldCat, Illinois libraries have an improved web presence for their holdings which makes their catalogs searchable online by library users; the capacity for interlibrary loan is improved. Activities improve users' ability to obtain and use information resources.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** As a continuing statewide initiative, the expectation is that LSTA funds will support the annual OCLC WorldCat Discover/FirstSearch subscription or subscription to a similar database suite. In support of activities to enhance local resources, LSTA and/or state funds may support statewide initiatives, sub grant competitions and/or cooperative agreements

**Timeline:** The annual, statewide database subscription is a high priority for LSTA and/or state funds. Special sub grant opportunities may be offered as necessary and appropriate 2023 through 2027.

**Project 3: Support the efforts of the Illinois library community to make resources discoverable.**

**What will be done/for whom:** Activities may include:

- Strengthen the integrity of the bibliographic records for the billions of books and resources available in Illinois libraries through support for the shared libraries' catalogs.
- Support for Illinois libraries to join or increase holdings in a shared catalog/automation consortium also known as a Local Library System Automation Program (LLSAP).
- Digitization support to carry out projects involving the selection, digital capture, preservation, storage, and provision of web access to important local, historical, and cultural collections. This also includes support to add Illinois' digital collections to the Illinois Digital Archives and the Digital Public Library of America.
- Support for technology solutions to make libraries' resources discoverable such as Wi-Fi hot spots that improve virtual access to discover information.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** Provide libraries with an infrastructure that supports sharing resources, discovery, and access to information for the people of Illinois. Activities support statewide solutions for economic efficiency and the standardization of cataloging records across all Illinois communities. Multiple organizations may be involved to make collections discoverable.

**Benefits or Outcomes Expected:** Activities improve users' ability to discover information resources:

- The quality of cataloging is improved; the numbers of full level records are increased, and duplicate records are decreased in libraries shared bibliographic catalogs making the search results more manageable.
- Collaborative automation systems improve access to information resources regardless of a user's approach to searching.
- Illinois citizens benefit from unique local, historical, and cultural digitized materials accessible via the web from their home, mobile devices, work, or library computers.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** Statewide initiatives, sub grant competitions and/or cooperative agreements support activities to make resources discoverable. The expectation is that a combination of LSTA and state funds will be used.

**Timeline:** Annual contracts for services will maintain cataloging support. Special grant opportunities may be offered as necessary and appropriate 2023 through 2027.

**Project 4: Support the efforts of the Illinois library community to make informed decisions to ultimately improve library services for Illinois residents.**

**What will be done/for whom:** Libraries are encouraged to evaluate their role in the changing community environment. The ISL contracts with a vendor to collect data about Illinois libraries with a reporting interface to compare and analyze statistics. ISL is a participant in the Institute of Museum and Library Services Public Library Statistics Cooperative that requires the collection of a core set of national public library data. This is accomplished through the statutorily required Illinois Public Library Annual Report. Other assessment strategies may be implemented as appropriate and necessary. Through evaluation, libraries are engaged to

explore possibilities and examine current and future trends impacting the greater statewide library community.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** ISL follows state procurement policies for contracting with a vendor to provide data collection and reporting services. Using vendor products like LibPas, all public libraries are required to enter their data within 60 days after the end of their fiscal year. ISL staff review and edit the local library data for accuracy prior to uploading it for national consideration. The statistics are available online for libraries and stakeholders to run reports and analyze their individual library's services and trends. ISL staff also prepares reports to compare and analyze data for local or statewide consideration.

Webinars or other means of individual or group training are offered to make the library workforce aware of the process and importance of participation in statewide data collections and evaluations. In addition to online training, links to the surveys as well as specific data reports are posted on the ISL website with informational articles published in the ISL electronic newsletter.

**Benefits or Outcomes Expected:** Activities improve library operations. Libraries have real-time and on-demand access to data for operational and peer benchmarking that incorporates qualitative and quantitative results. Communication is enhanced as cooperative efforts and achievements are documented with real comparative data. Data documents the increase/decrease in resource sharing across the state thus demonstrating the value of libraries working together on behalf of patrons.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** As a continuing statewide initiative, the expectation is that LSTA funds will be used to support annual evaluation through data collection and analysis. In support of making informed decisions, LSTA and/or state funds may support statewide initiatives, sub grant competitions and/or cooperative agreements.

**Timeline:** The annual, ongoing contract with a vendor is a high priority for LSTA or state funds 2023 through 2027. Libraries submit data annually.

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**Goal 2: Position the Illinois library community as an educational anchor by providing opportunities to support education, information fluency, lifelong learning.**

Support of library and reading services for people who are blind, physically disabled, or print disabled has been and remains a top priority. Through programs, presentations, and other educational experiences, the ILLINET library community of regional library systems, academic, public, school, and special libraries provide significant support for the personal growth, lifelong learning, and essential continuous education of Illinois residents of all ages and abilities, including a competent and knowledgeable library workforce.

**Need:** According to the 2020 Census, American Community Survey, approximately 2% of Illinois residents self describe themselves as having vision difficulty. This translates to 257,858 Illinois residents as being potentially eligible for talking books and/or braille services, up 5.7% from the previous census statistics.<sup>5</sup>

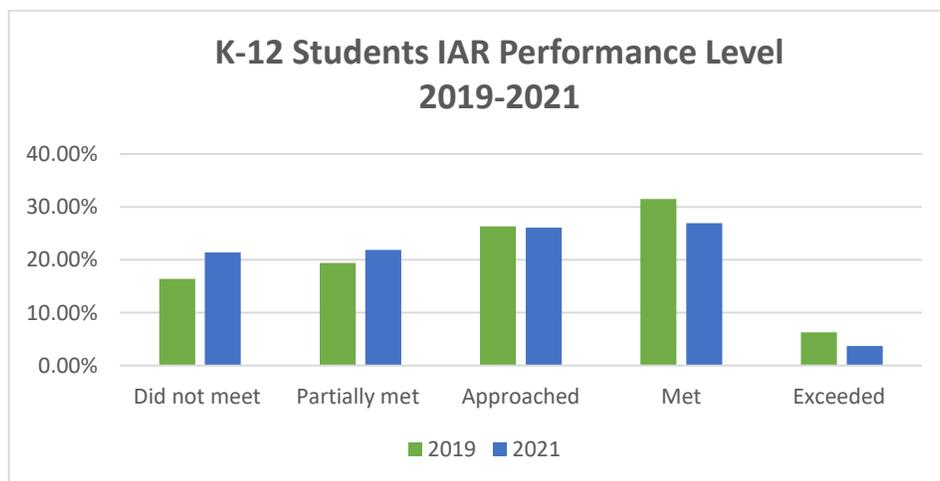
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<sup>5</sup> U.S. Census. 2020 American Community Survey. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B18&g=0400000US17&d=ACS%201-Year%20Estimates%20Detailed%20Tables&tid=ACSDT1Y2019.B18103>

Library workforce training has been and continues to be a cornerstone of helping libraries provide quality, seamless services for communities across Illinois. The results of the 2018-2022 long-range plan evaluation made clear that workforce training is a valuable use of LSTA funding, and that continuing to plan these types of programs for the next 5 years will prepare directors, staff, and trustees on how best to serve their library communities. According to our evaluators, the ISL was able to “demonstrate a sizeable, dedicated commitment to training and developing library staff across Illinois. ISL has done this through their sub grants “Director’s University”, “Elevate”, “Trustee Education”, and the Illinois Library Association (ILA) annual conference. These trainings provide Illinois library staff both topic expertise and help develop leaders at Illinois libraries across the state.”<sup>6</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic had an unprecedented impact on library staff and administrations, and now more than ever it is vital that we continue to support training and development to prepare for the new challenges that library services may face.

Patrons look to libraries to support their self-directed education and learning. Statistics from the Illinois Public Library Annual Reports for fiscal year 2020-2021 document that over 2 million people took advantage as public libraries offered 104,398 programs on various topics to meet the educational and informational needs of attendees, translating to an average of over 2,007 programs and training sessions being offered every week at public libraries across the state. The impact of COVID-19 closures motivated libraries to provide other activities that could be completed at home or on their own time. 2,709,142 participants took part in 68,097 self-directed activities resulting in over 1,309 activities per week.

Illinois Report Card 2020-2021 data shows an increase in students not meeting or partially meeting standards, while seeing a decrease in students meeting or exceeding performance standards in English Language Arts (ELA) on the Illinois Reading Assessment (IAR). Precise 2020 data is not available because of the COVID-19 pandemic, but its’ impact on learning is apparent when comparing scores from 2019 and 2021.<sup>7</sup>



<sup>6</sup> Simmons, AJ . Ph.D. , LaJoie, Sally, MLS (2022). Illinois State Library Evaluation of Use of Library Services and Technology Act Funds FY201 - FY2022 (Rep.).

<sup>7</sup> Illinois Report Card 2020-2021. State Snapshot, Academic Progress IAR. Retrieved from <https://www.illinoisreportcard.com/state.aspx?stateid=IL&source=trends&source2=iar>

Libraries are encouraged to explore diverse partnerships to access a broader range of resources and expertise (e.g., experts in reading comprehension) to impact the knowledge and skills of Illinois residents regardless of ages or abilities.

**LSTA Priorities** supported by the activities under this goal are expected to include:

- Expand services for learning and access to information and education resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all areas in order to support such individuals' need for education, lifelong learning, workforce development and digital literacy skills.
- (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 to the field of library and information services.
- Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.
- 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.
- Target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities including children (from birth through 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line.

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## **Projects under Goal 2:**

**Project 1: Provide and support library services and access to educational materials for print challenged Illinois residents.**

**What will be done/for whom:** The Illinois Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) provides public library services, via mail-order or through the Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) app, to any Illinois resident unable to read standard print material comfortably due to a permanent or temporary visual or physical disability. Activities support the ability and functions of the TBBS to circulate audio books, special audio equipment, and access to materials through digital technology, all designed for ease of use by talking book readers. Services target people of all ages, with visual or physical limitations, unable to read standard print, or hold or turn pages of a book. In 2021, the National Library Service updated its program eligibility criteria, making it easier for individuals with reading disabilities to access services by expanding the list of certifying authorities. While this change benefits patrons of all ages, it has created a decided advantage for students with learning and reading disabilities by creating an equal opportunity for education and access to resources, and a greater chance for overall success in school. Support of services for vulnerable populations such the blind and physically handicapped is a number one priority for use of LSTA and/or match funds.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** The TBBS, located at the ISL, is the liaison with the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. The [TBBS website](#) provides information seekers with details about the program as well as links to other services that support people eligible for this program. The TBBS website also includes a free downloadable application that will read web pages aloud. It can help anyone who

has difficulty reading on-line, including people with mild visual impairments, low literacy, English as a second language, or reading disabilities, such as dyslexia.

The TBBS provides a full range of library services specializing in audio and braille books, circulating books via the United States Postal Service specifically to residents enrolled in the Talking Book and Braille Program. Readers Advisors connect with patrons by telephone or email and assist them in learning how to download books, obtain library materials and equipment and participate in programs. Materials in braille are provided through an agreement with the Utah State Library Program for the Blind and Disabled.

**Benefits or Outcomes Expected:** People with visual or physical limitations, unable to read standard print, turn the pages or hold a book have access to library materials and equipment to support reading for information or pleasure. Without this service, the majority of eligible patrons would not have access to reading materials. Activities target persons having difficulty using a library and improve users' general knowledge and skills.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** A combination of state and LSTA funds will be used to support the activities of the Illinois Talking Book and Braille Service specifically targeting Illinois residents of all ages with visual, physical, or learning/reading disabilities that meet the national criteria for eligibility.

**Timeline:** 1<sup>st</sup> priority. Ongoing activities provided 2023 through 2027 for seamless services.

**Project 2: Support educational experiences for the library workforce and leadership to gain knowledge and enhance skills.**

**What will be done/for whom:** As new technologies emerge, responsibilities change, and the amount of information available grows exponentially, the library workforce must continually learn to remain relevant. Educational experiences, interactive training, group activities or independent learning will be strategies to advance the knowledge of the library workforce and leadership. The majority of activities are expected to target a statewide or regional audience. Participants vary (e.g., public library directors, front line staff, public library trustees) depending on the focus for the training with consideration given to the needs of the library workforce across all types of libraries and job responsibilities.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** Support opportunities for the library workforce and leadership to learn. Activities that support statewide or regional training; beginning or advanced programs in various formats including synchronous learning, live, in-person, or participatory learning; asynchronous learning, archived trainings and webinars (e.g. trustee training portals), and virtual presentations. Multiple organizations are expected to be involved in the development and implementation of programs. Programs are expected to emphasize a potpourri of topics based on the needs of the targeted audience.

**Benefits or Outcomes Expected:** Activities improve the library workforce. The skills of the library workforce and leadership are enhanced as attendees increase their knowledge and understanding to ultimately provide better library services for the people of Illinois.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** Statewide initiatives, sub grant competitions and/or cooperative agreements will support activities by which the Illinois library workforce learns through library programs or educational experiences.

**Timeline:** Specific training programs will be offered based on the intended audience, 2023 through 2027.

**Project 3: Support opportunities for the library community to provide educational experiences for Illinois residents to gain knowledge and enhance skills.**

**What will be done/for whom:** Strategies and opportunities are expected to include support for initiatives that engage readers of any age or ability in formal and independent reading including but not limited to book discussions, family reading nights, and reading clubs, including support for children and family reading through activities that may foster reading readiness, comprehension, and reading fluency. Libraries are encouraged to explore diverse partnerships to access a broader range of resources and expertise, such as reading comprehension experts or authors. Library efforts to innovate and develop unique and exciting educational programs and tools, including but not limited to makerspaces, learning labs, and STEAM-related educational opportunities, will be encouraged. These educational programs, informal training, customized workshops and virtual or participatory learning to raise awareness, should seek to improve skills or provide information to meet the learning needs, expectations, and interests of the participants.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** Libraries are encouraged to develop programs to engage their patrons in activities that highlight reading. Reading programs that offer unique opportunities for libraries to partner with other agencies and organizations with a vested interest in encouraging reading and partnerships are supported. Competitive offerings will also encourage the development and implementation of innovative educational programs that broadly address the needs and interests of the community.

**Benefits or Outcomes Expected:** Activities improve users' formal education or improve users' general knowledge and skills as libraries engage Illinoisans of ages and abilities to read for enjoyment, learning and information. Learners increase their competence, confidence, and knowledge through library-based learning. As libraries offer learning experiences, abilities are reinforced and learning is evident. Illinois citizens improve their skills to fully participate in their family, work, and community roles.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** Statewide initiatives, sub grant competitions and/or cooperative agreements will support activities by which educational programming may be developed and instituted based on an identified need.

**Timeline:** As necessary and appropriate to support a demonstrated need 2023 through 2027, annual opportunities for sub grants will be offered to eligible applicants.

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**Goal 3: Position the Illinois library community to provide quality library and information services through innovation in collection development, community engagement, and best practices.**

Innovation is going to be a key element in helping libraries remain relevant and on the cutting edge of technological and societal change in the coming years. The COVID-19 pandemic has forever changed the way we operate in everything from public safety to the way we educate our children, and it has laid bare inequities in everything from internet access to access to social services, exposing a glaring need for more supports and programs for people in marginalized communities. The call for equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts in schools, government, and public spaces is becoming an important focal point for planning, development, community engagement, and creating in policies and procedures. Libraries must explore possibilities, search out best practices and have the courage to discover innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of library users and the underserved.

**Need:** Libraries engage people of all ages and abilities by offering an abundance of quality reading materials, along with non-traditional collections to enhance learning opportunities. Based on conversations with libraries throughout the process of developing the long-range plan, many have recognized the changes the past few years within libraries and the communities they serve, paying special attention to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Libraries have expressed the desire for an opportunity not only to expand and update current collections, but to develop collections beyond books in order to engage their communities, drawing attention to the fact that libraries are much more than just books on shelves. Collections are the cornerstone of libraries of all types. When people have access to quality reading materials, they are more apt to become passionate about reading, which increases their exposure to new ideas and the potential to engage in future social and civic endeavors. Statistics collected in 2021 from the Illinois Public Library Annual Report confirm that people are using libraries to obtain the materials they need with 77,945,693 materials loaned.<sup>8</sup> Books accounted for 57 percent or 44,779,681 of that total. In 2021, the average cost of a children’s hardcover book was \$16.96; the average cost of a hardcover, young adult book was \$19.11; the average cost of an adult, hardcover book was \$27.43; the average cost of a graphic novel was \$17.82.<sup>9</sup> Illinois public libraries saved library users over \$908 million based on the average cost per book (\$20.28) and the number of books (only) borrowed.

In order to effectively engage their communities, libraries need the freedom and support to find innovative ways to address the needs and interests of their current patrons, as well as the ability to develop new programs and services to draw in new library users. Addressing the digital divide in their communities is one way for libraries to become a problem-solving institution. In Illinois, 7% of residents do not have adequate broadband infrastructure and 62% live in areas that have only one internet provider, according to the White House.

Locally, on the FCC and Microsoft measures:

- In Sangamon County, 91% of households could get broadband but 47% actually had it.
- In Logan County, 78% of households could get broadband but 34% actually had it.
- In Menard County, 54% of households could get broadband but 9% actually had it.
- In Macoupin County, 73% of households could get broadband but 20% actually had it.
- In Christian County, 85% of households could get broadband but 27% actually had it.
- In Montgomery County, 69% of households could get broadband but 18% actually had it.
- In Cass County, 78% of households could get broadband but 14% actually had it.<sup>10</sup>

And while providing internet access is a vital way in which libraries can meet the needs of their community, they should also be able to create learning experiences by giving patrons the ability to experience using other tools and technologies that they might not otherwise have access to.

For decades, libraries and librarians have served in an unofficial role as a place where individuals and families can be connected with social work services. Conversations with librarians in a diverse variety of communities have expressed the desire to have programs in which social workers are employed in a more official capacity. Evanston Public Library in Evanston, IL has pioneered one such program, expressing that “With numerous budget cuts to social services programs over the years, public libraries are encountering more individuals experiencing mental illness, homelessness, and poverty... Social workers in libraries bring a holistic approach to helping connect patrons to community resources such as housing, mental health, and employment services.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Illinois State Library. (2020-2021). Illinois Public Library Annual Report. Retrieved from Counting Opinions

<sup>9</sup> School Library Journal (2022, March 2). SLJ’s Average Book Prices for 2021-2022-to-date.

<sup>10</sup> State Journal-Register The 'digital divide': In Illinois, many still lack broadband access.

<sup>11</sup> Schacter, Jill. (2018) Public Library Social Work: An Emerging Field.

While overall, the state of Illinois' population is on the decline, the population is becoming more diverse. The Diversity Index is a tool used by the U.S. Census Bureau that identifies the "chance that two people chosen at random will be from different racial and ethnic groups". According to the 2020 U.S. Census, Illinois has a diversity index of 60.3%, up from the 2010 U.S. Census at 54.7%.<sup>12</sup> These numbers, along with a general increase social inclusion awareness, are indicative of the need for library communities to find new and innovative ways to engage a more diverse population and create welcoming spaces.

**LSTA Priorities** supported by the activities under this goal are expected to include:

- 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, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy and other types of literacy skills.
- Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.
- 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.
- Target library and information services to person having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities including children (from birth through 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line.

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## Projects under Goal 3:

### **Project 1: Support the Illinois library community's efforts to develop innovative collections to meet the changing needs of their communities**

**What will be done/for whom:** Libraries looking to build, replenish, modernize, or diversify their collections of all types of reading materials (books, e-books, audiobooks), or curate non-traditional collections (e.g., the loaning of musical instruments, yard/gardening equipment, seed libraries) will have the opportunity to innovate collection development projects and policies, including being empowered to address censorship efforts. Collections can cater to reading trends and interests in the community, as well as create cooperative lending and borrowing for supplies and equipment that may be unaffordable to individuals, but cost-effective when shared.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** Libraries are encouraged to develop collections to engage their current patrons, to grow community interest in the library by offering new and innovative collections, and to bring attention to the growing issue of censorship in library collections and spaces. Through surveys, soliciting ideas, conversations with patrons, and assessing community need by examining demographics and trends, libraries will be able to build collections and loan materials based on community need and interest.

**Benefits or expected outcome:** The freedom to create robust traditional book and reading material collections will serve both lifelong library users, as well as those who are new to what the library has to offer. In recent

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<sup>12</sup> United States Census Bureau. Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the United States: 2010 and 2020 Census. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html>

years, there has been increased focus on diversity and representation in children’s books. “Diverse, culturally authentic materials in library collections allow all children to meet people like themselves and develop an appreciation for the beauty of their culture and the cultures of others.”<sup>13</sup> Libraries need the opportunity to examine their own collections and to build them not only to reflect and represent all library users, but to allow readers to see beyond the borders of their own communities.

Through non-traditional collections, libraries will be better equipped meet the diverse and changing needs of patrons, creating an opportunity to engage people in the community who might not otherwise have used the library.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** Using a LSTA funds, statewide initiatives, sub grant competitions and/or cooperative agreements will assist Illinois libraries in providing innovative collections that reflect the needs and interests their communities.

**Timeline:** During fiscal years 2023 through 2027, annual opportunities for sub grants will be offered to eligible applicants.

**Project 2: Support the Illinois library community in their efforts to engage their population.**

**What will be done/for whom:** Strategies are expected to include programs that will position the library community as a leader, able to anticipate future expectations of library users and emphasize innovative technology solutions in a world with unimagined network devices and tools; to empower libraries to engage communities and surrounding regions that have limited access to library services, internet/broadband services, and technology; working with schools and other organizations to connect families for whom internet access is cost prohibitive; and using social media and other innovative communication tools to engage existing and potential future patrons, alerting them of all the library has to offer beyond books.

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** Support the development and implementation of programs and opportunities that give patrons access to technology that is new to them or to their community, and the ability to build programs to provide training on computers, software, and various technology devices. Empower libraries to hire mentors who are crucial to help train patrons on new programs and technologies, and to develop self-confidence and pride in their newly acquired skills. Encourage the development of engagement strategies that potentially bring library services and technology into areas where library and/or internet access is limited due to geographical or financial constraints (e.g., mobile libraries, circulating technology such as hotspots, laptops, and other technology that would help bridge the digital divide).

**Benefits or expected outcomes:** The expected benefit is to impact library and information services for persons having difficulty using a library and underserved urban and rural communities, including children from families with incomes below the poverty line, and to expand services for learning for individuals of all ages to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development and digital literacy skills.

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** Using LSTA funds, statewide initiatives, sub grant competitions and/or cooperative agreements will support libraries in connecting Illinois residents with vital technology and other library services.

**Timeline:** During fiscal years 2023 through 2027, annual opportunities for sub grants will be offered to eligible applicants.

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<sup>13</sup> Naidoo, Jamie Campbell, PhD (2014). The Importance of Diversity in Library Programs and Material Collections for Children. American Library Association, Association for Library Service to Children.

**Project 3: Support the Illinois library community's efforts to develop best practices and programs that meet the needs of people of diverse backgrounds and abilities**

**What will be done/for whom:** As the demographics of Illinois change, libraries must explore possibilities, search out best practices, and have the courage to discover innovative solutions to meet the evolving needs of library users and the underserved. Strategies are expected to include educational programs, informal training, customized workshops and virtual or in-person learning to raise awareness of and provide support for groups of diverse ethnic, social, and cultural backgrounds; support for initiatives that create a culture of equity, diversity, & inclusion (EDI) to make libraries more welcoming spaces; support programs and efforts that reduce social isolation; and assist libraries in providing access to social and economic safety nets outside of the library, including those who are experiencing homelessness (e.g., social work pilot programs).

**Procedures used to carry out activities:** Identify trends to explore and discover best practices and models for improving the quality of and access to library and information services, especially those supporting ethnic and social diversity. Invest in projects that encourage testing new ideas to make libraries' resources and services available in new and innovative ways for people of diverse backgrounds and abilities.

**Benefits or Outcomes Expected:** The expected benefit is a positive impact on library services for individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as the opportunity for libraries to offer non-traditional services to meet the broader needs of the community

**How SLAA will use federal funds to assist in meeting this goal:** Statewide initiatives, sub grant competitions and/or cooperative agreements will support activities by which programming may be developed and instituted based on an identified need.

**Timeline:** During fiscal years 2023 through 2027, annual opportunities for sub grants will be offered to eligible applicants.

## Coordination Efforts

State Goals	LSTA Purposes	Projects and Priorities	IMLS Focal Areas	IMLS Intents
<p>Goal 1: Position the Illinois library community to extend library services for all Illinois residents by providing access to information and ideas</p>	<p>Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.</p>	<p>Project 1: Sub-grants and agreements that support resource sharing through interlibrary loan and delivery.</p>	<p>Institutional Capacity</p>	<p>Improve Library Operations</p>
	<p>Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve coordination among and between libraries and entities, for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services.</p>		<p>Information Access</p>	<p>Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources</p>
	<p>Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.</p>	<p>Project 2: Sub-grants for database subscriptions.</p>	<p>Information Access</p>	<p>Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources</p>
		<p>Project 3: Sub-grants and agreements to make resources more discoverable through cataloging accuracy, increased holdings in shared catalogs, and digitization projects.</p>	<p>Institutional Capacity</p>	<p>Improve Library Operations</p>
			<p>Information Access</p>	<p>Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources</p>
		<p>Project 4: Sub-grants and agreements for research, statistics, and data collection.</p>	<p>Institutional Capacity</p>	<p>Improve Library Operations</p>

State Goals	LSTA Purposes	Projects and Priorities	IMLS Focal Areas	IMLS Intents
<p>Goal 2: Position the Illinois library community as an educational anchor by providing opportunities to support education, information fluency, and lifelong learning.</p>	<p>Expand services for learning and access to information and education resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all areas in order to support such individuals' need for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills.</p>	<p>Project 1: Sub-grant for Talking Book and Braille Services, which provides library services and access to educational materials for print-challenged Illinois residents.</p>	<p>Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>Improve users' general knowledge and skills; Improve users' formal education</p>
	<p>(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 to the field of library and information services.</p>	<p>Project 2: Sub-grants for continuing education, training, and skills enhancement for the library workforce.</p>	<p>Institutional Capacity</p>	<p>Improve the library workforce</p>
	<p>Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.</p> <p>Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as to individuals with disabilities and/or with limited functional literacy or information skills.</p>	<p>Project 3: Sub-grants to provide library-based learning opportunities and experiences for Illinois residents.</p>	<p>Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>Improve users' general knowledge and skills; Improve users' formal education</p>
	<p>Target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities including children (from birth through 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line.</p>		<p>Human Services</p>	<p>Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers (a) their personal, family, or household finances, (b) their personal or family health and wellness, or (c) their parenting and family skills</p>

State Goals	LSTA Purposes	Projects and Priorities	IMLS Focal Areas	IMLS Intents
<p>Goal 3: Position the Illinois library community to provide quality library and information services through innovation in collection development, community engagement, and best practices.</p>	<p>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, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy and other types of literacy skills.</p>	<p>Project 1: Sub-grants for libraries to develop innovative collections.</p>	<p>Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>Improve users' general knowledge and skills</p>
	<p>Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations.</p>		<p>Information Access</p>	<p>Improve users' formal education</p> <p>Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources</p>
	<p>Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds as well as to individuals with disabilities and/or with limited functional literacy or information skills.</p>	<p>Project 2: Sub-grants for community engagement.</p>	<p>Lifelong Learning</p>	<p>Improve users' general knowledge and skills</p>
	<p>Target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities including children (from birth through 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line.</p>		<p>Economic &amp; Employment Development</p>	<p>Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support</p>
	<p>Target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities including children (from birth through 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line.</p>	<p>Project 3: Sub-grants to develop best practices and programs that meet the needs of people of diverse backgrounds and abilities.</p>	<p>Human Services</p>	<p>Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers (a) their personal, family, or household finances, (b) their personal or family health and wellness, or (c) their parenting and family skills</p>
			<p>Civic Engagement</p>	<p>Improve users' ability to participate in their community; Improve users' ability to participate in community conversations around topics of concern</p>

Where appropriate, the **ISL works with other state agencies** to coordinate resources, programs, and activities. The ISL leverages the federal and state investment to complement but not duplicate the efforts of other agencies in elementary and secondary education, early childhood education, workforce development, and other federal programs and activities as they relate to library services.

- The Illinois State Board of Education administers state and federal grant programs to schools for early childhood, elementary and secondary education. ISL complements the efforts of the Illinois State Board of Education by providing grants to school districts specifically in support of school library services for pre-kindergarten through high school students and teachers.
- To work in an Illinois school as a librarian, teacher, school support personnel, or an administrator, the individual must obtain a Professional Educator License. The license is renewed every 5 years with evidence of successful completion of 120 professional development hours provided by an approved provider. The ISL is an approved professional development provider by authority of the Illinois State Board of Education. This relationship authorizes ISL to offer educational opportunities for the school library workforce with professional development hours credited towards the renewal of teaching licenses. In addition, this partnership allows the ISL to subcontract with Illinois Heartland Library System and Reaching Across Illinois Library System to provide professional development hours credit under the auspices of the ISL for school librarians participating in appropriate regionally based programs. The ISL facilitates professional learning opportunities, suitable for license renewal and aligned with state learning standards which create a stronger school library workforce to ultimately impact student learning.
- The Illinois Board of Higher Education administers state and federal higher education grant programs for colleges and universities. ISL complements the efforts of the Illinois Board of Higher Education by providing grants to academic libraries for the provision of academic library services to support the students and faculty in their educational endeavors. In addition, public and special libraries, regional library systems and library organizations also offer library resources and services that support education for people regardless of age.
- Many state agencies work in concert to address the literacy needs of those who need help to read and speak English fluently. Local literacy projects often use a combination of state and federal funds from the ISL, Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board and/or the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity to meet literacy needs. Family literacy programs, funded by the ISL, equip parents and their children, together and separately, to improve their basic reading, math, writing or language skills. These projects require partnership between a library, an early childhood provider (school or literacy organization) and an adult education provider (community college or educational agency). Adult Volunteer Literacy Tutoring programs utilize volunteer tutors to provide one-on-one instruction for adults who want to improve their reading, math, writing and language skills. The educational needs of working adults are met through workplace skills enhancement programs, which provide on-site basic skills learning opportunities at their workplace.
- State and federal funds support the element of the literacy program appropriate to the statutory responsibility of the awarding agency. ISL awards funds in support of the library-based activities and literacy instruction for adults and families who read at the lowest levels. The Illinois State Board of Education awards funds in support of the early childhood activities. The Illinois Community College Board awards funds in support of the adult education activities. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity funds activities supporting workplace

instruction. Working together, state and federal funds are leveraged for the greatest impact to improve literacy in Illinois.

- ISL Literacy staff serves on the Illinois Community College Board Advisory Council, the state’s coordinating board for community colleges. Public Act 91-0830 provides for governance of Adult Education and Family Literacy by the Illinois Community College Board, stating the agency shall establish an advisory council consisting of all categories of eligible providers; agency partners, such as the State Board of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Illinois Department of Employment Security, the Secretary of State Literacy Program; and other stakeholders to identify, deliberate, and make recommendations to the State Board on adult education policy and priorities. Illinois is home to 48 community colleges in 39 districts and has the third largest community college system in the nation serving close to 1 million residents each year in credit and noncredit courses.<sup>14</sup>
- In 2015, the Illinois Digital Heritage Hub (IDHH) was selected as a Service Hub for the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) with responsibilities shared by the ISL, the Chicago Public Library, the Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries of Illinois (CARLI), and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The Illinois Digital Heritage Hub coordinates the inclusion of digital collections from around the state into DPLA. Work began with collections added from the Illinois Digital Archives (IDA) and CARLI–Digital Collections and by April 2022, the Hub had submitted over 548 collections which include 510,757 items to DPLA. An IDHH Committee has been formed to work on furthering the growth of the Hub through statewide representation on working groups and for committee members.
- The ISL is in the unique position of managing the disbursement of funds through the Secretary of State’s special license plate program. Illinois drivers may opt to purchase special license plates to commemorate any number of organizations, sports, or events with a portion of the fees returned to the association selected. While no LSTA funds are involved, this special license plate program supports an annual grant to the libraries operated by the Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs. Funds obtained through the sale of special military license plates support the five Illinois Veterans’ Homes libraries in Anna, Chicago, LaSalle, Manteno and Quincy to provide reading and reference materials, access to technology and other library services for the residents living in the homes.
- ISL Reference staff coordinate information services for all state agencies through databases, article searches, map collections, and collections of historic state documents. Coordination with other state agency libraries (e.g. Illinois Department of Transportation, Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Mental Health) help to insure that state government employees have the resources they need to succeed in their duties.
- The ISL is actively involved with state agencies and offices to coordinate resources, programs and activities that leverage state and federal dollars to ensure Illinois libraries are represented.
  - ISL staff work with GeoMARC, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville to create maps based on taxing districts and population; GeoMARC is also essential in providing critical information as the basis for the state funded Public Library Per Capita and Equalization Aid Grant awards.
  - ISL staff actively serve on boards and/or advisory committees in collaboration with the following agencies:

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<sup>14</sup> Illinois Community College Board. (2016, July 19). Community Colleges Focus on Reforming Developmental Education [Press release]. Retrieved from [http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/pr/Developmental\\_Education\\_Reforms\\_7-19-16.pdf](http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/pr/Developmental_Education_Reforms_7-19-16.pdf)

- American Library Association – the United for Libraries division to establish literary landmarks in the state of Illinois.
- Illinois Department on Aging – the annual Central Illinois Senior Celebration providing information and health screenings to enhance the lives of persons 50 and older. The Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland, AARP Illinois, local hospitals and senior groups are also involved as sponsoring agencies.
- Illinois Library Association – to represent Illinois libraries and the millions who depend on them.
- Illinois Reading Council - to promote reading and authors: the Prairie State Award Committee and the Illinois Reads Book/Author Award Selection Committee, and efforts to present literary heritage awards in the state.
- Illinois School Library Media Association – to provide leadership and support for the development, promotion, and improvement of the school library media profession and programs in Illinois.
- Illinois State Archives – to support the depository of public records of Illinois’ state and local governmental agencies.
- Illinois State Board of Education – to support K-12 education and professional development.

In summary, coordinated efforts with other state agencies maximize the investment of state and federal funds in Illinois.

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## Evaluation Plan

The ISL is committed to the evaluation of individual projects and to the evaluation of this plan based on IMLS guidelines. Individual project evaluations and reports are the foundation when evaluating success in meeting the overall goals and priorities stated within this document. Adherence to federal guidelines is integral in the evaluation of the overall LSTA program in Illinois.

- Evaluation of sub grants to libraries: Sub grants are required to submit quarterly reports that summarize the progress of project activities and expenditures in order for ISL staff to monitor disbursements and adherence to the approved program. In the post project reports, sub grants provide information on how project objectives were met; plans for follow-up or continuation of the project; problems encountered during the project; and suggestions for others interested in replicating the project.
- Surveys and assessments: As appropriate, educational programs with lifelong learning as the intent will integrate a participant learning survey to capture specific outcomes including the questions identified by IMLS to measure success. Other surveys and assessments may be implemented to gather evaluative data from other programs.
- Annual assessment: The IMLS focal areas have been integrated into reporting requirements to appropriately categorize applicable projects for annual review of progress towards meeting the goals set forth under this plan. The ISL will review project reports to track annual progress towards meeting expectations in these distinct program areas. Illinois will build on the strengths of successful programs and determine if programs should be expanded or discontinued to continually improve library services for the people of Illinois. Exemplary projects, best practices

and outcomes, will be shared on the annual IMLS state program report as well as with the Illinois library community.

- Five Year Evaluation: An independent evaluator will conduct an assessment of the FY2023-2027 plan following the guidelines provided by IMLS.

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## Stakeholder Involvement

Primary stakeholders are those agencies eligible to apply for LSTA funds. The ISL recognizes three types of agencies as eligible to apply for LSTA funds: libraries, regional library systems and library organizations.

**Library:** To be eligible for LSTA grants under this plan, a library must meet the criteria as defined by the Illinois Compiled Statutes and the Administrative Code Rules. The agency must be recognized as a “Full Member Library” meeting the criteria for library system membership as defined by the regional library system’s board, and subject to approval by the State Librarian. [[23 Ill. Adm. Code 3030.110](#)]

The library must agree to honor the current ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code<sup>15</sup> and all current resource-sharing agreements. The library must share its collection without charge with other libraries in Illinois based on those agreements. Local funds for the library may not be decreased as a result of being awarded grant funds. Public libraries must honor all current laws regarding non-resident use.

Illinois library institutions are required to annually certify eligibility for grants and services from the ISL. The certification process confirms compliance with the statutory criteria for membership in a regional library system validates the accuracy of a library agency’s contact information and verifies basic data for branch or building libraries. The June 2022 certification statistics document the statewide total for all certified library agencies as 1,793 which includes 640 public library agencies; 210 special library agencies; 796 school districts; and 147 academic library agencies. These 1,793 library agencies are eligible to receive LSTA funds.

**Regional Library System:** To be eligible for LSTA grants under this plan, a regional library system must be recognized by the ISL as meeting the criteria defined by Illinois Compiled Statutes [[75 ILCS 10/2](#)] and the Administrative Code Rules.

- A multi-type library system serving a minimum of 150,000 inhabitants or an area of not less than 4,000 square miles and serving a minimum 10 or more public libraries, elementary and secondary school libraries, institutions of higher education libraries and special libraries.
- A public library system consisting of a single public library serving a city of over 500,000 population.

There are three library systems in Illinois. Two of the library systems are membership-based and multi-type, drawing their membership from academic, public, school, and special libraries located within a specific geographic boundary: Reaching Across Illinois Library System consists of 1,267 libraries in northern Illinois; Illinois Heartland Library System consists of 525 libraries in southern Illinois. The third

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<sup>15</sup> White, Jesse, Secretary of State and State Librarian/Illinois State Library. Revised 2015 ILLINET Interlibrary Loan Code. (2015). Retrieved from [https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/library/libraries/ill\\_code.html](https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/library/libraries/ill_code.html)

library system is the Chicago Public Library System serving the City of Chicago. These three library systems are eligible to receive LSTA funds.

**Library Organizations:** The ISL recognizes certain legitimate Illinois library professional organizations as eligible for LSTA grants. They must draw membership from librarians or various types of Illinois libraries as defined by Illinois Compiled Statutes and the Administrative Code Rules [\[23 Ill. Adm. Code 3030.110\]](#). Their headquarters must be within the State of Illinois. Their mission must have the charge for the promotion, provision, development and improvement of libraries and library services in Illinois. Illinois library organizations such as the Illinois Library Association are eligible to receive LSTA funds.

The Illinois State Library Advisory Committee (ISLAC) advises the State Library in the development of state and federal library plans including LSTA; provides input in addressing policies, issues, and activities for library development and cooperation among different types of libraries; makes recommendations concerning the evaluation of statewide services; and addresses the use of technology to expand access to information for the state's residents.

ISLAC is established by Illinois Compiled Statutes [\[15 ILCS 320/5\]](#) Membership includes not only representatives from all types of libraries, but also Illinois residents and individuals who represent groups of special library users, such as the disabled community and the library education community. Statewide geographic representation and staggered terms provide balance to the committee. Reports on compliance and progress towards meeting the goals of LSTA are shared with and endorsed by ISLAC as appropriate.

Grant Reviewers serve as an advisory group critical to the implementation of and adherence to the LSTA plan. The Library Services and Technology Act Grant Review Committee [Administrative Authority: [23 Ill. Adm. Code 3035.720 \(b\)](#)] represents a mix of academic, school, special, and public libraries, staff from regional library systems and library organizations, residents with special subject expertise, and appropriate ISL staff. With broad perspectives and statewide geographic representation, they bring a variety of opinions, perspectives, and knowledge to ensure that the LSTA grant program is administered with integrity, equity and fairness. Grant reviewers generally serve a one or two-year term. This group of stakeholders is critical in the implementation of the plan by reviewing and making recommendations to fund sub grants that meet an established criteria. All grant reviewers must adhere to the Conflict of Interest Annual Disclosure Statement and Terms of Agreement, implemented to identify potential bias during the grant application review process.

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## Communication and Public Availability

A link to the Long Range Plan for the Use of LSTA Funds 2023-2027 will be posted on the ISL's web site with availability announced to the library community in E-News, the electronic newsletter from the ISL, with nearly 5,000 subscribers. The approved document will be emailed to members of the ISLAC. Others may print the document from the web site or request a printed version.

At the end of each fiscal year, a summary of significant accomplishments will be shared with the Illinois library community to show progress towards meeting goals and highlight best practices and benefits. The outcomes of notable grant projects will be shared with the Illinois library community through E-News,

reports, and on web sites. Selected successful grant results, products and benefits will be shared during workshops, programs and at state conferences.

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## Monitoring

The staff of the ISL work with potential applicants on an ongoing basis to increase awareness of the purposes of LSTA and how grant funds can be used to make a difference for the residents of Illinois. Grant writing workshops, meetings, archived webinars and one-on-one conversations are examples of strategies used to educate the Illinois library community about the requirements of LSTA and projects appropriate within the Long Range Plan for the Use of LSTA Funds 2023-2027.

To facilitate communication and accountability after the grants are awarded, an ISL staff person is assigned to each project as their project monitor. Project directors are encouraged to call or communicate by email with their monitor any time questions or concerns arise.

The ISL conducts monitoring at least once annually via telephone, email or in person, as determined by past performance of the sub grant and the amount of the grant award. During the monitoring visit, the monitor, project director and appropriate project personnel review applicable project documents and reports. Matters such as reporting and fiscal responsibilities, the overall progress of the project in relation to the approved project proposal, challenges, and expected outcomes are discussed. The monitoring and conversations identify issues and solutions to resolve potential problems. The monitor submits a written report detailing the results of the monitoring visit that is retained in the grant file in accordance with the ISL records retention schedule.

In addition, ISL monitors the progress and success of sub grants through written financial and narrative reports. ISL requires quarterly reports of all sub grants regardless of the level of the award. Whereas, the Illinois Grant Funds Recovery Act [[30 ILCS 705/Section 4\(b\)\(2\)](#)] requires all grants awarded in excess of \$25,000, regardless of the funding source or the state agency awarding the grant, to submit quarterly progress and expenditure reports. If a project is deemed high-risk, as identified by the monitor or determined by past performance of the sub grant, additional documentation may be required to ensure compliance with project goals and fiscal accountability. LSTA funded sub grants also submit a post project report which provides a retrospective overview and analysis of the project.

Project directors submit statistics, progress reports towards meeting outcomes, correspondence, copies of significant public relations items and other materials relevant to the project evaluation. The grant monitor reviews and signs off on all activity and financial reports and contacts the project director with any questions or concerns. The monitor identifies exemplary projects that are subsequently reported to IMLS in the annual State Program Report.

Per [23 IL ADC 3035.140\(e\)](#) Grants, Expenditures and Audits, all Secretary of State (SOS) and ISL sub grants that receive a combined cumulative total of \$175,000 or more from any of the SOS/ISL administered grant programs are required to file their annual agency-wide audit upon completion of grant activity and completion of their annual agency audit.

Record keeping and documentation of LSTA project activities abide by federal and state guidelines. The ISL retains complete project files in accordance with the State Records Retention Schedule. In addition to

reports and letters, project files include email messages that involve communication between ISL and a sub grant in the performance of an official function. A project is not “closed” until the five-year evaluation covering the fiscal year of a given project has been accepted by IMLS; therefore, a project could be “open” for 3 to 5 years. Project files are retained for at least three years at the ISL and seven years in the State Records Center.

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## **Assurances**

The ISL manages the LSTA grant program with fairness, equity, and accountability. In support of responsible management, the Secretary of State requires all staff to annually participate in Ethics Training and Sexual Harassment Training. Appropriate staff members are additionally required to participate in Open Meetings Act/Freedom of Information Act Training and Procurement Training.

The Director and staff of the ISL guarantee that Illinois will comply with all assurances, certifications and LSTA requirements set forth at 20 USC Sec. 9121 et seq., and all accompanying program regulations. No Library Services and Technology Act funds will be used to replace normal operating funds of the state library agency.

The required signed assurances and certifications submitted with the Long Range Plan to the Institute of Museum and Library Services include:

- Assurance of Non-Construction Programs
- State Legal Officer’s Certification of Authorized Certifying Official
- Internet Safety Certification for Applicant Public Libraries, Public Elementary and Secondary School Libraries, and Consortia with Public and/or Public School Libraries.