

REPUBLIC OF PALAU

Palau Public Library Five-Year State Plan 2023-2027

For submission to the
Institute of Museum and Library Services

Submitted by:
Palau Public Library
Ministry of Education
Republic of Palau 96940

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MISSION

The Palau Public Library is to serve as a gateway for lifelong learning and easy access to a wide range of information resources and to ensure the residents of Palau will be successful, literate and resourceful in the Palauan society and the world.

PALAU PUBLIC LIBRARY BACKGROUND

The Palau Public Library (PPL), was established in 1964, comes under the Ministry of Education. It is the only public library in the Republic of Palau, with collections of about 15,000 physical items. The library has three full-time staff, the Librarian, the Library Assistant, and the Library Aide/Bookmobile Operator. The mission of the PPL is to serve as a gateway to lifelong learning and easy access to a wide range of information resources to ensure the residents of Palau will be successful, literate, and resourceful in the Palauan society and world.

The PPL strives to provide access to materials, information resources, and services for community residents of all ages for professional and personal development, enjoyment, and educational needs. In addition, the library provides access to EBSCOHost databases and links to open access sources of scholarly information. It seeks to promote easy access to a wide range of resources and information and to create activities and programs for all residents of Palau. The PPL serves as the library for Palau High School, the only public high school in the Republic of Palau. PPL is open to everyone throughout Palau and currently serves 5,104 active patrons.

The library collection is comprised of books, newspapers, magazines, journals, vertical files, maps, and CD-ROMs. The library also maintains a small but important collection of Micronesia and Pacific materials with a particular emphasis on Palau. In collaboration between the public library and the US Embassy, the public library also maintains a small section of the “American Desk” with materials and resources particularly about United State history and education. In addition to the general collections, PPL also houses the Palau Bookmobile collection and is in-charge of the operation of providing materials and services throughout Koror and Babeldaob. The Palau Bookmobile was funded by a previous IMLS grant to provide library services and the implementation of interlibrary loan programs to underserved communities in Palau. A variety of information access services are available in the Palau Public Library, including reference, circulation, holds, access to special collections, scanning, printing, Internet access, computer use, and library activities and programs. The library staff provides library orientations, tours, and individual or group instruction for use of print and electronic resources.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COMMUNITY

The Republic of Palau is a developing state comprised of a small cluster of islands located in the Western Pacific Islands region with a population of 17,661 (2015). As a former “district” within the United Nations Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Palau maintains strong historical and political ties with the United States of America. On October 1, 1994, Palau regained its independence and now shares a close relationship with the United States, as outlined under the Compact of Free Association. Palau’s education system is modeled after that of the United States. Palau has a strong public school system and an active private school system. Each school

has a library that serves students as well as the local communities. Palau Community College (PCC) is the only post-secondary school in the Republic and serves students from Palau, Micronesia, and the Pacific region.

The Republic of Palau is an archipelago of about 300 islands of which only nine are inhabited. These nine islands are divided into sixteen states. Based on 2015 Palau statistics, Koror is the most populous state with 65% of the population. While the majority of the population consists of Palauans, Palau has attracted many foreign workers in recent years. The population by citizenship is 75% Palau, 16% Philippines, 2% USA, 1% Japan, 1% Taiwan, 1% People's Republic of China, 1% Bangladesh, and 3% other. Palau has a 99% literacy rate for those over the age of ten years old: 69% have the ability to read write and understand English and Palauan, 26% have the ability to read, write, and understand English and another language, 1% have the ability to read, write, and understand English only, 2% have the ability to read, write, and understand Palauan only, 1% have the ability to read, write, and understand another language besides English and Palauan, and 1% do not have the literacy skills required to read or write in any language.

The library community in the Republic of Palau is comprised of a wide range of institutions including seventeen (17) public school libraries; six (6) private school libraries, three (3) state library/resource center, the Palau Public Library, the Tan Siu Lin Palau Community College Library, Olbiil Er a Kelulau Congress Library, the Ministry of Health Belau National Hospital Library, Singichi Ikesakes Memorial Law Library, Belau National Museum Research Library, the Belau National Archives, the Palau International Coral Reef Research Center, and the Bureau of Arts and Culture Library. These collecting institutions fall under various government ministries and non-government entities. For residents in more remote villages from Palau's sixteen states, particularly on the outlying islands of Kayangel, Peleliu, and Angaur, the local school libraries have the potential to meet the needs of underserved community members by providing access to the Internet and to quality information sources. Due to the MOE school consolidations, residents from the other three states of Palau - Ngiwal, Ngchesar and Ngatpang - have no school and thus no school library. Each of the state government recently established their library/resource center through the funding of the previous LSTA-IMLS grant. With all these school libraries in Palau, six of them are only accessible by boat or ship. In 1994, the Palau Association of Libraries (PAL) was established to bring together individuals from all of the collecting institutions to support and strengthen all of Palau's libraries. PAL's efforts primarily focus on providing training sessions for library workers, creating a professional support network, and distributing useful information for the development of libraries.

Palau is geographically isolated, but able to connect with the world through relatively consistent telecommunications and Internet access. Although technology infrastructure and use in Palau is rapidly growing, Palau still faces challenges in this area. Palau National Communications Corporation (PNCC) remains the primary provider of telephone and Internet access, and individual, business, government, and education accounts connect to the Internet through PNCC. Despite ongoing discussions about improving telecommunications and Internet speed, the Fiber Optic Cable connectivity in Palau has completed, and most agencies now are experiencing a faster internet connection compare to previous years. With continuing support from IMLS, libraries in outlying areas from the population center can connect and gain access to the Palau

Union Catalog (PUC), <https://palau.follettdestiny.com>. The Palau Union Catalog has also allowed libraries to establish a growing electronic network of library resources based primarily at PCC and PPL. There is enthusiasm among school librarians to make more resources available to a greater number of people in Palau's underserved communities. In an effort to improve access to electronic sources and the PUC, the fiber optic has allow PNCC to provide a high speed internet access throughout Palau for everyone to have access to both fee-based and open source materials. With an average household income of less than \$12,000 for each household, students and the community rely greatly on Libraries for Internet access for school works and other electronic resources.

ACCESS TO LIBRARIES

For residents of the commercial and business center of Palau in Koror, as well as nearby Airai State, who have a means of reliable transportation, access to Palau's main libraries-Palau Community College, Palau Public Library and larger special libraries- is relatively easy. For residents in more remote villages residing in Palau's sixteen states, residents without transportation, and residents who rarely visit the libraries, access is more difficult. Through this LSTA projects, we will be able to bridge the gap, by expanding library services and improve access to information, and to promote reading literacy and to instill a love of reading. This project will also encourage collaboration within the community members to direct our outreach efforts to those who may experience barriers to using library services. For an effective collaboration, we work closely with external partners such as State governors' office, community leaders and community associations. Through these collaborations, we are able to find outreach opportunities and bring patrons into the library. These partnering organizations we target can be considered a library collaborator for their efforts in helping community members' access to library services within their communities succeed.

Through this LSTA projects, we will be able to bridge the gap, by providing professional development training, increase access to the library resources and high speed internet capabilities to all Palau libraries to better meet our users need. This will allow people from remote villages to easily locate library resources, online resources from their local school/community library, and access these resources without requiring travel to the main libraries in Koror.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Palau Public Library, under the Ministry of Education, gathered input and conducted assessments and surveys from all the libraries in Palau to identify the needs of libraries in the area of collection development, types of programs and outreach activities, technology improvement and professional development. In addition, PAL members, many of whom work in libraries throughout Palau, met during quarterly meetings to discuss and develop a survey to evaluate the needs of the library workers at each library as well as the needs of the community members. This allowed the group to identify a wider range of community library needs and to decide as group what would best meet those needs.

There is a need for age appropriate, educational and inspiring books for students and community in Palau. The impact of the right book on a young reader is impossible to quantify but it has

always been evident to librarians and educators. To paraphrase Dr. Ranganathan 's second and third laws of librarianship “every book it’s reader and every reader their book.” The education system in Palau is well established and based on the US model. It strives to provide the best education possible to the students of Palau with limited available resources. Reading is a key factor in the development of intellectual curiosity and critical thinking skills. By providing the best books available for students and the community, including materials that deal with controversial subjects that students may not be exposed to elsewhere, libraries can have a direct impact on their educational success and development as well-rounded, compassionate, and reasoned adults. We will purchase, based on need and current holdings of the best books available for each of the libraries in Palau. The need was determined both through a review of currently held materials in all libraries that serve students and the community and through the reoccurring requests from patrons and librarians for an increase in the quality and quantity of reading materials. Due to limited access and some issues with the Internet connection, print reference materials are still in great demand in Palau. Resources like reference books as well as recreational and educational reading materials will be invaluable resources for students and the community to replace the outdated and inaccurate library materials.

Based on interviews conducted and stakeholder and end user surveys conducted as part of the last evaluation, it was apparent that there is a continued need to support programs and outreach activities to engage communities in library activities. In this day and age, with the constant use of technology, libraries need to conduct outreach programs to promote reading for children. Programs such as Read Aloud, Reading Challenges, After School Tutoring, and Story Times will be conducted in various community libraries to promote the love of reading. Other activities such as making the bookmobile available in various parts of the community would also entice children in the community to read for fun.

Another significant area of need identified is to ensure that libraries keep up with technology and to provide programs and services to promote lifelong learning. It has been noted by local library workers that they do not feel they have the necessary computer skills to begin working with the upgraded Palau Union Catalog-OPAC or to help their patrons with online research because they do not have the equipment that is well maintained and with updated software programs for accessing information technology and to develop a digital literacy skill to support students and the community. To help address this issue, there will be quarterly workshop provide to train the librarians with the upgraded OPAC and cover the basics of the Follett Cataloging System (used for the PUC), basic computer skills, and online research techniques for all library staff. One major long-term goal is the connection and availability of the OPAC to all the libraries in Palau to help facilitate the use of library materials, and the previous LSTA grant have made this possible and will continue to help support with the system upgrade. This has allowed library patrons in Koror and the remote villages to locate available library resources both in their local libraries and all connected libraries in Palau.

There is a continued need for the librarians of Palau for lifelong learning, networking and the professional development of new skill sets to meet the informational demands of those we serve. Palau is unique in that it is a new and developing nation. Geography serves to keep us distant from the rest of the world and limits our abilities to network with peers and stay abreast of new developments and trends in the world of library science. The focus will be based on the actual

needs of Palauan libraries and librarians. The needs were determined through feedback received at Palau Association Libraries quarterly meetings and direct requests from librarians at several on-island institutions serving the information needs of various groups ranging from the schools and local communities. In addition, we will use training the trainer method and we will seek and attend off-island professional development trainings/workshops in order to both increase the on-island knowledge and expertise and allow for experts who will be available to Palauan libraries in the long-term.

GOALS FOR FY 2023-2027

These three goals of the proposed five-year plan were created based on the results of all the feedback we received through our evaluation report and needs assessment. These goals will be accomplished to meet the needs of the students and diverse community.

Goal 1: Update library collection development and support programs and outreach activities.

Goal 2: Improve Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) and technology upgrade.

Goal 3: Provide trainings and professional development for librarians to enhance skills in library workforce.

GOAL 1:

➤ Update library collection development and support programs and outreach activities.

LSTA 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;

LSTA Priority #5:

- target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;

LSTA Priority #6:

- target library and information services to persons having difficulty using a library and to underserved urban and rural communities, including children (from birth through age 17) from families with incomes below the poverty line (as defined by the Office of Management and Budget and revised annually in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 9902(2)) applicable to a family of the size involved;

Measuring Success Focal Area (s):

- 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

Programs (Activities):

- Increasing the variety and type of reading materials available in libraries. (2023-2027).
- Wide array of new books for all school libraries. (2023-2027).
- Collaborate with NGOs to offer more creative programs for young people. (2023-2027).
- Extended formats of lending materials beyond physical books. (2023-2027).
- Increase outreach programs to promote reading for children. (2023-2027).
- Implement more library programs and outreach activities to the public. (2023-2027).
- Implement library programs to improve digital literacy skills. (2023-2027).

Output Targets:

- New and more variety and types of updated resources for all libraries.
- Monthly outreach programs to target underserved community.
- Promote and encourage the development of reading literacy.

Outcome Targets:

- Patrons will have access to a wide variety of format of new and updated materials for educational, professional and personal development.
- Patrons will learn and develop skills and knowledge in their work place or for personal growth.
- Underserved community will have the opportunity to learn and have access to new programs and materials provided.

Evaluation Methods:

- A survey will be provided for the community members and students to recommend a list of new materials and books to be purchased.
- We will also provide a collection report through OPAC to review statistics of all added materials in order to both review effectiveness and future needs.
- Library staff will provide a monthly statistic report on number of books circulated and collection usage data.
- Surveys will be conducted for each library programs and activities.

GOAL 2:

- Improve Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) and technology upgrade.

LSTA 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;

LSTA Priority #2:

- Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve 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;

Measuring Success Focal Area (s):

- Institutional Capacity - Improve library operations
- Information Access:
 - ✓ Improve users' ability to discover information resources
 - ✓ Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources

Programs (Activities):

- Continue to renew and upgrade the three (3) sites connected to the Palau Union Catalog (PUC) online public access catalog (OPAC) (2023-2027).
- Conduct training on the Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC) and cataloging every quarter for all library personnel. (2023-2027).
- Expand and recruit other libraries to connect to OPAC (2023-2027).
- Technology upgrade and trainings for library personnel and community. (2023-2027).

Output Targets:

- Increasing number of new library materials cataloged into the database.
- Increase technology training programs for staff and patrons.
- Increase number of electronic resources available for patrons.

Outcome Targets:

- Library patrons will be able locate and obtain library resources through OPAC.
- Patrons will be able to search for availability of local library materials from anywhere in the world through OPAC.
- Library staff will have the skills and knowledge to apply in their work place.
- Patrons will be able to access more information online.

Evaluation Methods:

- Survey for library staff will be conducted at the beginning and the end of the trainings.
- Statistical reports on library programs and training using the OPAC will be provided.

GOAL 3:

- Provide trainings and professional development for librarians to enhance skills in library workforce.

LSTA Priority #3:

- (a) provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the

delivery of library 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;

Measuring Success Focal Area (s):

- Institutional Capacity
 - Improve the library workforce
 - Improve library operations

Programs (Activities):

- Seek and attend off-island professional development trainings and conferences in order to both increase the on-island knowledge and expertise and allow for experts who will be available to Palauan libraries in the long-term (2023-2027).
- Develop and implement trainings and workshop for all newly-hired library staff. (2023-2027).
- Implement ongoing virtual trainings and sessions on staff development. (2023-2027).
- Annual customer service/telephone etiquette training for all library staff. (2023-2027).
- Training opportunities in a variety of ways. (2023-2027).

Output Targets:

- At least one library staff from each of the Palau libraries will complete at least one professional development training for each year in line with the work they are doing for the library.
- Head librarian and library specialist will provide opportunities for trainings needed.
- Number of workshop and conferences attended.
- Number of trainings provided on-island
- Number of library staff attended

Outcome Targets:

- Library staff will deliver efficient and effective customer services.
- Library staff will demonstrate and implement the knowledge and new skills in their workplace
- Library staff will be up-to-date in the new library information and technology in the 21st century skills.
- Library services and programs will be improved
- Students and the community will experience the quality and availability of library services being improved
- Palau will have more trained and experienced library workers.

Evaluation Methods:

- Library staff will greatly benefit from trainings and networking with other professionals when attending off-island library professional trainings and conference.

- Training and conference participants will submit a trip report summarizing conference activities and share with other Palau librarians what they learned through a formal workshop presentation, to be held in conjunction with PAL meetings.
- Survey will be provided to measure the patron’s satisfaction, comments and feedbacks of library services and programs.
- Survey from library staff on the effectiveness and quality of the trainings and conferences.

Coordination Efforts:

Five-Year Crosswalk			
State Goal	IMLS Focal Area(s)	Associated Project	IMLS Intent
Goal 1: Update library collection development and support programs and outreach activities	Lifelong Learning Information Access	Increase and update library materials in all format	Improve users’ ability to discover information resources
		Collaborate with NGOs	Improve users’ ability to obtain and/or use information resources
		Increase and implement library programs to promote reading	Improve users’ formal education
		Improve digital literacy skills	Improve users’ general knowledge and skills
Goal 2: Improve Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) and technology upgrade	Institutional Capacity Information Access	Renew and upgrade the OPAC	Improve library operations
		Upgrade Library Technology	Improve library’s physical and technology infrastructure
		Expand and recruit other libraries to connect to OPAC	Improve users’ ability to discover information resources
		Technology Trainings	Improve the library workforce
Goal 3: Provide trainings and professional development for librarians to enhance skills in library workforce	Institutional Capacity	Off-Island training opportunities and conferences	Improve the library workforce
		Implement trainings for newly hired	Improve the library workforce
		Virtual trainings for staff	Improve the library workforce
		Annual customer service/telephone etiquette training for staff	Improve the library workforce

Evaluation Plan:

Successful completion of these project goals will be completed in a manner that allows for increased support and sustainability of this five-year plan. Successful completion will be evaluated in relation to the goals and objectives established in this proposal. Evaluation will be conducted for all the program activities outlined in this plan, as well as survey from all the program participants.

Stakeholder Involvement:

The Palau Public Library staffs, MOE Library Specialist, and PAL members from different private and public schools, agencies and institutions were involved in the planning process of this five-year plan. PAL members, many of whom work in libraries throughout Palau, began the process by brainstorming ideas and providing inputs for the development of this plan based on needs they identified while working or volunteering in local libraries. This allowed the group to identify a wider range of community library needs and to decide as group what would best meet those needs. Following stakeholders will continue to provide inputs and take part in the evaluation process.

- Palau Association of Libraries
- Palau Community College
- State Government Offices
- MOE school library staff
- The Palau National Congress
- Palau library users of all age group

Communication and Public Availability:

Once awarded, the Five-Year Plan proposal and all the documents will be posted on the Ministry of Education website. Hard copies will be provided to all the libraries in Palau including the Palau Association of Libraries and all the other agencies and government partners. Interested individuals and the community will have access to the documents through their local libraries and hard copies can be made available to them. Communications with all parties will be accomplished through PAL quarterly meetings as well as formal and informal reports.

Monitoring:

The Palau Public Library, Ministry of Education (MOE) will successfully implement the Five-Year Plan project through appropriate management of funding, facilities, equipment, and supplies. The overall grant project will be managed by MOE Chief of School Management/Grant Project Director Ms. Aileen Mikel. The Palau Public Library is directly under the Division of School Management in the Ministry. The Palau Public Librarian, Ms. Mary Arius, and Education/Library Specialist, Ms. Imengel Mad will provide management and oversight for the development and implementation of the Five-Year Plan project.