

# **Vermont Department of Libraries**

## **Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)**

### **Grants to States Program Implementation Evaluation**

#### **Federal Fiscal Year 2018 - Federal Fiscal Year 2022**

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State Librarian



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# EVALUATION SUMMARY

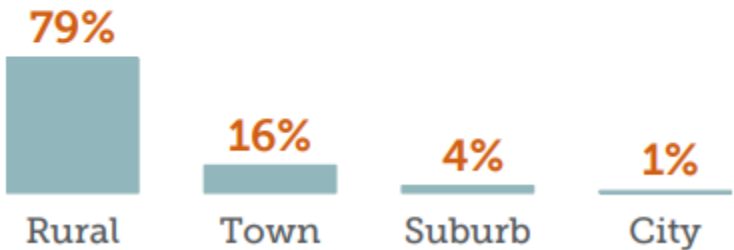
## Summary Introduction

The 2019 Public Libraries Survey (PLS) reported that Vermont had a total of 185 public library jurisdictions employing 252.15 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff categorized as librarians (77.09 FTE are reported as having an American Library Association [ALA] accredited Master’s degrees). Similarly, the Academic Libraries Survey (ALS) reported that 15 institutions of higher education employ 99.83 FTE librarians.

According to the National Center for Educational Statistics’ (NCES) Elementary/Secondary Information System (EISi), Vermont’s 187 public school districts employ 205.43 full-time librarians.

The total FTE library staff is about 360 in Vermont’s public library outlets and the majority of these libraries (79%) are in very rural environments. In fact, recognizing the rural nature of the state is essential to understanding the context within which library services are provided in the Green

### Public Library Outlets by Locale



Mountain state. The largest public library in Vermont (Burlington) has a service population of fewer than 45,000 people and is the only public library in the state with a print collection of more than 100,000 volumes. Only 15 of Vermont’s 185 public libraries (8.15%) have service populations in excess of 9,000 people.

Given Vermont’s population of 643,077<sup>1</sup>, the state’s annual Library Services and Technology

Act (LSTA) Grants to States<sup>2</sup> program allotment from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) of approximately \$ 1 million<sup>3</sup> per year translates into \$ 1.53<sup>4</sup> per person on an annual basis. LSTA funds alone are inadequate to meet the library and information needs of Vermont’s approximately 645,000 residents. The Vermont Department of Libraries’ (VTLIB) challenge is to find ways to make \$ 1.53 per person transformative in terms of library services; to leverage a relatively small amount of money to accomplish major results by strategically

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census (April 1, 2020)  
<sup>2</sup> The report will refer to the Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States program simply as LSTA throughout this report  
<sup>3</sup> Four year LSTA Grants to States allotment average ((FFY [Federal Fiscal Year] 2018 State Allotment + FFY 2019 State Allotment + FFY 2020 State Allotment + FFY 2021 State Allotment) / 4)  
<sup>4</sup> Four year LSTA Grants to States allotment average / United States Census Bureau Decennial Census (April 1, 2020)

deploying funds and leveraging other public and private monies in support of high-quality library and information services.

There are four goal statements in the *Library Services and Technology Act: Five-Year State Plan for Federal Fiscal Years 2018-2022*. They are:

***GOAL 1: Vermonters will have access to resources and available statewide through interconnected platforms that share content/collections across libraries.***

***GOAL 2: Vermont libraries will have opportunities to strengthen their capacity to provide quality services and resources to all citizens.***

***GOAL 3: Vermont libraries will enhance workforce readiness programs, including entrepreneurial endeavors, using materials and services available through libraries.***

***GOAL 4: Vermont libraries will build partnerships, programs, and services that enhance access to early childhood and family literacy, digital literacy, and lifelong learning library resources, particularly to populations facing barriers to traditional library services.***

## ***Retrospective Question A-1 Summary***

### **Agency’s Internal Assessment and Evaluator’s Assessment**

As part of the assessment process, the evaluators asked the former Vermont State Librarian, the Interim State Librarian, and the Vermont Department of Libraries’ LSTA Coordinator to offer their joint appraisal of progress their agency had made toward achieving each of the four goals included in the Vermont Department of Libraries’ 2018-2022 five-year plan. The evaluators prefaced their request for this internal assessment by noting the fact that the state was only three years into the implementation of the five-year plan. Consequently, it was acknowledged that it was unlikely that any of the goals would be completely or finally achieved.

Table 1 offers a summary of both the Vermont Department of Libraries’ internal assessment and the evaluators’ conclusions.

<b>Table 1 - Vermont Department of Libraries’ and Evaluator’s Assessment of Achievement</b>		
<b>GOAL</b>	<b>Vermont Department of Libraries’ Internal Assessment</b>	<b>Evaluators’ Assessment</b>
GOAL 1: Vermonters will have access to resources and available statewide through interconnected platforms that share content/collections across libraries.	Achieved	Achieved

GOAL 2: Vermont libraries will have opportunities to strengthen their capacity to provide quality services and resources to all citizens.	Partly Achieved	Achieved
GOAL 3: Vermont libraries will enhance workforce readiness programs, including entrepreneurial endeavors, using materials and services available through libraries.	Partly Achieved	Partly Achieved
GOAL 4: Vermont libraries will build partnerships, programs and services that enhance access to early childhood and family literacy, digital literacy, and lifelong learning library resources, particularly to populations facing barriers to traditional library services.	Partly Achieved	Achieved

## **Evaluator’s Goal 1 Summary**

***GOAL 1: Vermonters will have access to resources and available statewide through interconnected platforms that share content/collections across libraries.***

Vermont expends the lion’s share of its LSTA funding (81.77%) to further objectives related to Goal 1. One project, entitled *Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER* (Collaborative Libraries of Vermont) alone accounts for almost thirty percent (29.45%) of total expenditures for the FFY 2018 - FFY 2020 period covered by this evaluation. Other truly significant projects are also included under Goal 1. These encompass a major electronic database initiative that provides access to a wide array of resources to the users of all types of libraries, the ABLE (Audio, Braille, Large Print and Electronic Books) Library, which is Vermont’s library services to the blind and print-disabled, consulting services, and a host of other smaller efforts.

An examination of all of these programs reveals that VTLIB largely achieved Goal 1 on the basis of the *Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER* and *Statewide Databases for Public, School, and Academic Libraries* alone. In fact, the highly-integrated resource sharing project, which includes Integrated Library System (ILS), Interlibrary Loan (ILL), and a physical delivery system, has transformed the face of resource sharing in Vermont in a few short years. The evaluators believe that the Vermont Department of Libraries has **ACHIEVED** Goal 1.

## **Evaluator’s Goal 2 Summary**

***GOAL 2: Vermont libraries will have opportunities to strengthen their capacity to provide quality services and resources to all citizens.***

Only one project, *Continuing Education for the Vermont Library Workforce*, has routinely been reported in the SPR under Goal 2 (Capacity). However, several other projects reported under other goals have contributed significantly to VTLIB’s performance in meeting its objectives of increasing the capacity of local libraries to serve. In particular, the *Building Library Capacity*

*(Consulting and Statistics)* project categorized and reported on under Goal 1 (Access to Resources) and the *Summer Reading Program* project evaluated under Goal 4 (Literacy and Lifelong Learning) clearly offer local libraries “opportunities to strengthen their capacity to provide quality services.”

Taken together, these programs enabled VTLIB to deliver on its goal of enhancing the capacity of Vermont libraries to deliver quality library and information services. Based on a review of both the Continuing Education for the Vermont Library Workforce project and several others including the two specifically mentioned above lead the evaluators to conclude that the Vermont Department of Libraries has **ACHIEVED** Goal 2

### **Evaluator’s Goal 3 Summary**

***GOAL 3: Vermont libraries will enhance workforce readiness programs, including entrepreneurial endeavors, using materials and services available through libraries.***

Discussion of Goal 3

VTLIB placed very limited LSTA resources into its Goal 3 effort. Furthermore, the single project funded, the *Job Hunt Helpers Grant* program was only marginally successful. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that some progress toward the goal of “enhancing workforce readiness programs... using materials and services available through libraries” was made when the Job Hunters Helpers Grant and Digital Literacy for Job Seekers are taken together. The evaluators believe that the Vermont Department of Libraries has **PARTLY ACHIEVED** Goal 3.

### **Evaluator’s Goal 4 Summary**

***GOAL 4: Vermont libraries will build partnerships, programs, and services that enhance access to early childhood and family literacy, digital literacy, and lifelong learning library resources, particularly to populations facing barriers to traditional library services.***

Discussion of Goal 4

Vermont’s efforts in achieving Goal 4 can be described as small but mighty! VTLIB expended an average of under \$80,000 per year on all three of the Goal 4 projects (*Summer Reading, Book Awards, and Cultural Programming Grants for Public Libraries*). Nevertheless, each of these projects had an even greater impact than anticipated as VTLIB and VHC staff creatively and quickly moved to reimagine how the programs could be delivered. The evaluator’s conclude that the Vermont Department of Libraries has **ACHIEVED** and exceeded the objectives of Goal 4.

## ***Retrospective Question A-2 Summary***

**A-2. To what extent did VTLIB's Five-Year Plan activities achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?**

The Vermont Department of Libraries' activities during the period evaluated have impacted four of the Measuring Success focal areas: Information Access, Institutional Capacity, Lifelong learning, and Economic and Employment Development. While no specific projects were directed at either the Human Resources of Civic Engagement focal areas, a strong argument can be made that many of the activities undertaken under Vermont's Literacy and Lifelong Learning goal (Goal 4) also promote Civic Engagement.

Efforts related to Information Access were robust, while those focusing on Economic and Employment Development were meager. Several projects undertaken took on more of a Institutional Capacity focus as the pandemic unfolded.

"Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources" was the the intent most frequently cited and also accounted for a significant portion of Vermont's LSTA expenditures. When combined with the closely related "improve users' ability to discover information resources," these two intents were present in three of the four most costly projects undertaken: *Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER*; *Statewide Databases for Public, School and Academic Libraries*; and *Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired*. At the other end of the cost spectrum, VTLIB realized a tremendous return of investment in its three Lifelong Learning focused projects: *Summer Reading Program*, *Book Awards*, and *Cultural Programming for Vermont Public Libraries*. These projects had a notable effect in the "Improve users' formal education" and "Improve users' general knowledge and skills" at a very modest cost.

## ***Retrospective Question A-3 Summary***

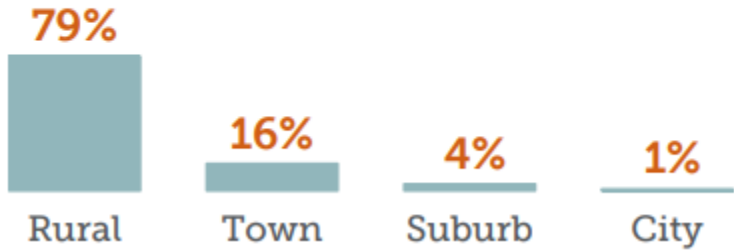
**A-3. Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for VTLIB's Five-Year Plan activities? (Yes/No)**

Only one project, Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired (ABLE Library), which is Vermont's implementation of the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled program, qualifies as being a substantial focus on the basis of percentage of expenditure specified by IMLS in the evaluation guidelines.

# EVALUATION REPORT

The 2019 Public Libraries Survey (PLS) reported that Vermont had a total of 185 public library jurisdictions employing 252.15 full-time equivalent (FTE) staff categorized as librarians (77.09 FTE

## Public Library Outlets by Locale

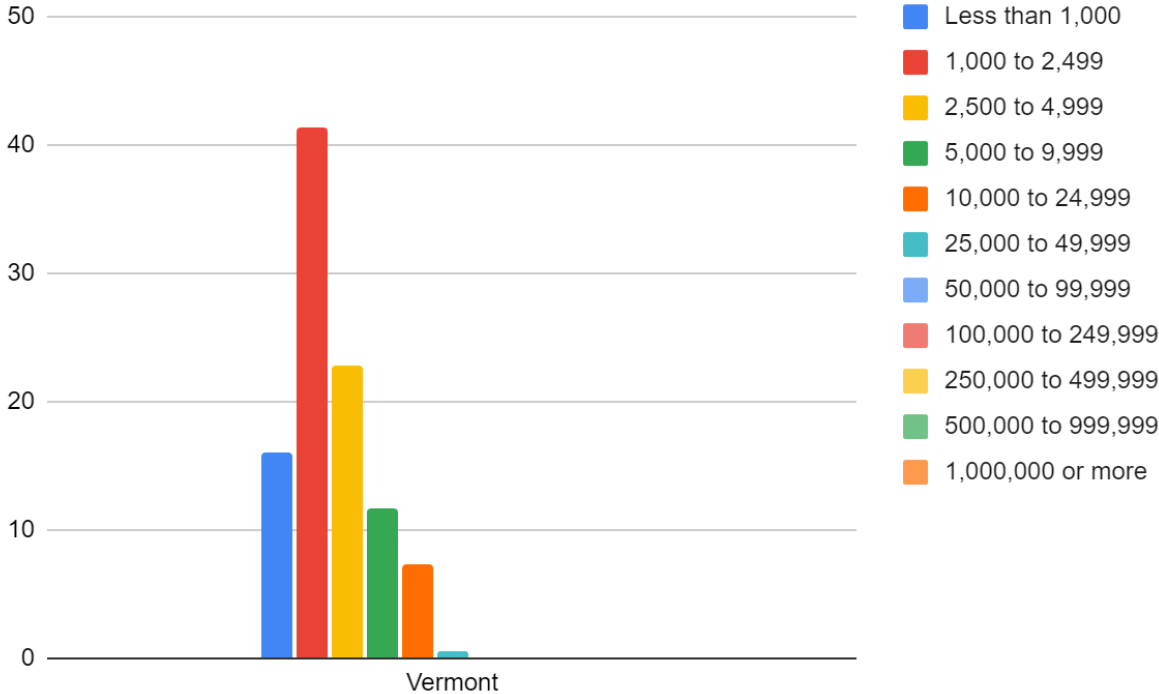


are reported as having an American Library Association [ALA] accredited Master’s degrees). Similarly, the Academic Libraries Survey (ALS) reported that 15 institutions of higher education employ 99.83 FTE librarians.

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school districts employ 205.43 full-time librarians.

The total FTE library staff is about 360 in Vermont’s public library outlets and the majority of these libraries (79%) are in very rural environments. In fact, recognizing the rural nature of the state is essential to understanding the context within which library services are provided in the Green Mountain state.





The largest public library in Vermont (Burlington) has a service population of fewer than 45,000 people and is the only public library in the state with a print collection of more than 100,000 volumes. Only 15 of Vermont's 185 public libraries (8.15%) have service populations in excess of 9,000 people. The majority of libraries serve communities with less than 2,500 people in them.<sup>5</sup>

## ***Evaluation Introduction***

Given Vermont's population of 643,077<sup>6</sup>, the state's annual Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grants to States<sup>7</sup> program allotment from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) of approximately \$ 1 million<sup>8</sup> per year translates into \$ 1.53<sup>9</sup> per person on an annual basis. LSTA funds alone are inadequate to meet the library and information needs of Vermont's approximately 645,000 residents. The Vermont Department of Libraries' (VTLIB) challenge is to find ways to make \$ 1.53 per person transformative in terms of library services; to leverage a relatively small amount of money to accomplish major results by strategically deploying funds and leveraging other public and private monies in support of high-quality library and information services.

There are four goal statements in the ***Library Services and Technology Act: Five-Year State Plan for Federal Fiscal Years 2018-2022***. Each of the goals is stated below and LSTA-funded activities carried out in support of the goal are described. Finally, the evaluators' assessment of whether each goal has been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved is presented.

## ***Goal 1 Retrospective Assessment - Access to Resources***

***GOAL 1: Vermonters will have access to resources and available statewide through interconnected platforms that share content/collections across libraries.***

### **Goal 1 Description and Discussion**

Following are the titles of the projects and the total amount of LSTA FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 funding that was expended on activities undertaken in support of Goal 1.

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<sup>5</sup> Public Library Survey (2019). Table 1A. Percentage of distribution of public libraries, by population of legal service areas and state: Fiscal year 2019.

<sup>6</sup> United States Census Bureau, Decennial Census (April 1, 2020)

<sup>7</sup> The report will refer to the Library Services and Technology Act Grants to States program simply as LSTA throughout this report

<sup>8</sup> Four year LSTA Grants to States allotment average ((FFY [Federal Fiscal Year] 2018 State Allotment + FFY 2019 State Allotment + FFY 2020 State Allotment + FFY 2021 State Allotment) / 4)

<sup>9</sup> Four year LSTA Grants to States allotment average / United States Census Bureau Decennial Census (April 1, 2020)

<b>PROJECT TITLE/ Activities</b>	<b>THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL</b>
<i>Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER</i>	\$845,415.64
<i>Building Library Capacity (Consulting and Statistics)</i>	\$498,744.81
<i>Statewide Databases for Public, School, and Academic Libraries</i>	\$414,557.22
<i>Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired and to State Institutions</i>	\$327,517.01
<i>Digital Literacy for Job-Seekers</i>	\$119,405.73
<i>Motion Picture Public Performance License</i>	\$48,925.56
<i>FiberConnect Wide Area Network (WAN)</i>	\$43,195.75
<i>e-Book and e-Audiobook Collection Development Grant</i>	\$22,440.00
<i>Streaming Movie Licenses for VT Schools (Partially LSTA and Partially CARES Act Funded)</i>	\$17,506.50
<i>Preserving Vermont Newspapers on Microfilm</i>	\$9,549.29
<i>Continuing Education for Vermont Library Workforce (Placed 2018 under Goal 2)</i>	\$0.00
<b>GOAL SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,347,257.51</b>

Goal 1 expenditures represent 81.77% of Vermont’s total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period.

*Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER*

Vermont allocates the lion’s share of its LSTA allotment (81.77%) to initiatives carried out in support of Goal 1. The largest of the efforts in this category is entitled *Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER*. CLOVER is an acronym for “Collaborative Libraries of Vermont.” This project, which has several interlinked modules, alone accounted for almost thirty percent (29.45%) of Vermont’s LSTA expenditures in the FFY 2018 - FFY 2020 period covered by this evaluation. Together, the three major components of this program: the CLOVER (SHAREit) interlibrary loan system, the VERSO integrated library system, and a robust courier service to move physical materials, have literally transformed resource sharing in the Green Mountain state in recent years.

When the same team of evaluators conducted the 2013 - 2017 LSTA five-year evaluation for Vermont, the VTLIB was about to replace its mechanism that ensures that even the smallest of libraries can benefit from a wealth of resources held by the vast majority of the public libraries as well as approximately one-third of academic and school libraries. The former resource sharing system, which might charitably be characterized as a legacy system, provided access to limited holdings, offered minimal functionality and presented a highly unfriendly interface. In its place Vermont has now implemented a well-integrated system resources sharing system.

Interlibrary loans fell from 75,643 for FFY 2018 to 53,157 in FFY 2019. With the implementation of CLOVER in 2017, materials sharing between Vermont libraries initially soared. However, with concerns about whether the COVID19 virus could spread on physical surfaces and the closure of many libraries in 2020, interlibrary loans suffered in 2020. However, interlibrary loans rebounded in FFY 2020 to 66,496 and are eventually expected to exceed 2018 levels since more libraries, resources, and courier stops have been added.

In a web survey of the library community conducted by the evaluators between October 26 and November 9, 2021, almost half (48.9%) of the 104 library directors, library staff members, and trustees identified interlibrary loan support as the most impactful program that the state funds with LSTA dollars. This mirrors the findings from the internal SLAA self-assessment carried out by the evaluators in August 2021 when the then State Librarian and his key staff indicated that the interlibrary loan program as a whole was the most successful or impactful carried out during the period covered by the assessment.

Comments from the library community in the online survey underscore the importance of the program. One librarian said:

“The CLOVER and courier services have had a huge impact on our patrons.”

Another added:

“The courier service and interlibrary loan is essential to us. As a small library, the access that interlibrary loan provides our patrons helps us to ensure an equity in service to that of larger libraries.”

### *Building Library Capacity (Consulting and Statistics)*

The second largest percentage of Vermont’s LSTA funding (17.37%) has been devoted to a project entitled *Building Library Capacity (Consulting and Statistics)*. While this project has regularly been reported to IMLS under state Goal 1 (Access to Resources) in the State Program Report (SPR), there is a strong argument to be made that it impacts Goal 2 (Capacity) to an even larger degree.

This project enables VTLIB to offer a wide variety of support and assistance to Vermont’s libraries (primarily to public libraries) in categories including governance and management, youth services, technology, issues directly impacting rural library services, and efforts to meet the needs of individuals with special needs including the blind and otherwise print-disabled.

While the Coronavirus pandemic heavily impacted the way in which consulting services were offered, there is ample evidence that, if anything, adjustments made by VTLIB to cope with library closures and travel restrictions actually enhanced the effectiveness and reach of services. Although the mechanisms used to interact with the library community changed dramatically as COVID-19 (Coronavirus Disease 2019) emerged, the number of direct consultations between the VTLIB consulting corps and local libraries actually increased.

CONSULTING SESSIONS	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020
Number of Direct Individual Consultations	2,344	2,556	2,414

Furthermore, overall contact with individual libraries soared as VTLIB used its online presence to monitor and report the local status of library services throughout the state and to disseminate helpful resources to assist library directors and their boards in making critical decisions. VTLIB developed a Library Service and Status Survey and reported the information gathered from libraries. VTLIB reported that they developed the tool: “To inform libraries what their peers are doing and help them make their own decisions.” Results of the survey and other relevant information is being reported on an ongoing basis at: <https://libraries.vermont.gov/covid19>.

One respondent to the online survey targeting the library community said:

“Throughout the pandemic we had access to information, communication and resources for our individual libraries.”

Another component of the *Building Library Capacity* project is the collection and analysis of library statistics on a statewide basis. The information gleaned from this activity serves both the State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA) and local library decision-makers in that it provides longitudinal data regarding the status of library services in the state. The full picture of the impact of the pandemic on library services is just beginning to emerge and it is likely that the information collected prior to as well as during the pandemic period will help shape both the 2023 - 2027 LSTA Plan as well as other new and ongoing services.

#### *Statewide Databases for Public, School, and Academic Libraries*

An important element of Vermont’s effort to achieve Goal 1 (Access to Resources), VTLIB uses LSTA funds to help support a robust array of electronic information resources to all Vermont residents. Individuals can access a suite of 49 Gale Cengage databases at public, school, and academic libraries, as well as at their homes or offices by getting login credentials through their local public library or through the school or academic institution they attend.

Although usage of the databases is healthy on a per capita basis compared to some other states, both the number of sessions and searches declined as the pandemic emerged and settled in. While usage has begun to rebound since 2020, it has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels. The following table summarizes that trend.

Year	Vermont Online Library			
	Sessions	Avg. Session Length (min)	Full Text Retrievals	Searches
Calendar 2018	454,742	14.45	285,183	863,467
Calendar 2019*	353,490	9.89	227,186	725,387
Calendar 2020*	260,811	9.08	166,286	477,241
Calendar 2021	320,395	9.42	196,035	469,449

\* 2019 and 2020 statistics reflect incomplete data. GALE database totals are lacking data for August and September 2019 and for October 2020. Adding estimated totals for the missing months reduces, but does not reverse, the downward trend for 2019 and 2020.

Like many other states, Vermont is examining its return on investment in electronic databases. There is no question that the products are highly valued by regular users of the resources and that they help individual libraries extend the impact of their local resources by offering a core of quality information. It is recognized that the databases also ensure a level of information access equity that would not be possible without them. One concern expressed by VTLIB staff was that it was “hard to drive public library users to a more academic product like Gale.” There has been some experimentation in offering some additional targeted products such as HeritageQuest. VTLIB offered this product for several years but dropped it because usage was disappointing and the more robust Ancestry.com product was deemed too costly.

One offering that has proven popular among public library users is the Universal Class product. Users have started courses on a wide variety of topics and have completed a large number of lessons and submitted tens of thousands of assignments.

Year	Universal Class					
	Registrations	Courses Started	Logins	Lessons Viewed	Videos Watched	Student Submissions
Calendar 2018	698	1,539	25,826	24,160	26,200	19,890
Calendar 2019	1,221	2,829	60,982	78,279	44,340	43,079
Calendar 2020	1,241	3,280	58,306	91,281	55,216	45,994
Calendar 2021	698	2,361	24,755	75,505	50,725	30,736

### *Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired and to State Institutions*

In the three years covered by this evaluation, VTLIB invested just under fourteen percent (13.95%) of its LSTA funds on *Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired and to State Institutions*. The core activity under this project is Vermont's implementation of the Library of Congress' (LOC) implementation of the National Library for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS). Vermont has delightfully branded its regional library for the blind effort as the ABLE (Audio, Braille, Large Print, and Electronic Books) Library.

The ABLE Library is an essential component of VTLIB's endeavors to fulfill Goal 1 (Access to Resources). In addition to providing the typical talking book program, VTLIB does an excellent job of linking the NLS-oriented services to local libraries by providing access to a collection of large print materials that are offered both to individuals and as rotating deposit collections. This appears to result in a greater awareness among local library staff of core talking book services. The ABLE Library garnered a number of positive mentions in the web survey of the broader library community.

The evaluators had the privilege of interacting with both the staff of the ABLE Library and with the ABLE Library Advisory Committee composed of advocates for individuals with disabilities and users/consumers of the talking book program.

One member of the Advisory Committee offered what might be the ultimate endorsement of the talking book program. They said, "Talking books is the best part of being blind!" Users of the program were unanimous in praising the ABLE Library staff for their performance during the pandemic. Staff members established a rotating on-site schedule to ensure minimal disruptions in service and consumers of the program noticed the result. One person called the effort "heroic" and another added that they had read 180 books during the "COVID year."

The ABLE Library has managed some notable successes during the pandemic period. One example of this has been the implementation of the Duplication on Demand (DOD) program that gives traditional cartridge-based talking book users access to a wider array of titles and benefits both program patrons and increases staff efficiency. The availability of DOD directly translated into higher circulation.

One aspect of the ABLE Library's service has been severely disrupted by the pandemic. Vermont has traditionally engaged in an active program of recording monographs by Vermont authors and/or of Vermont interest for eventual inclusion in the national talking book collection. In FFY 2018, Vermont reported completing 14 titles. Due to the pandemic, the recording studio closed in 2020. While the program has continued with a tech savvy volunteer recording materials from their home, the output of the effort dropped to only one title in FFY 2020. However, there may, in fact, be a silver-lining to this disruption. VTLIB and the ABLE Library staff have pivoted to embrace the remote recording scenario and the future of the program looks promising.

The chart below tracks the ABLE Library's performance in the three-year evaluation period. It clearly demonstrates that there was little disruption in services due to the pandemic.

VERMONT ABLE LIBRARY	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	CHANGE 2018 2020
Braille Readers (Individuals)	16	17	13	-18.80%
Cartridge (DB) Readers (Individuals)	1,080	1,099	1,071	-0.80%
BARD Audio Book Readers	244	234	234	-4.10%
Non-BARD Braille Circulation (includes books & interlibrary loan - does not include NLS magazines)	4	33	7	75.00%
Cartridge (DB) Circulation (includes books & interlibrary loan - does not include NLS magazines)	41,590	43,977	48,555	16.70%
BARD Braille Circulation (Downloads)	560	562	766	36.80%
BARD Audio Circulation (Downloads)	12,649	12,419	14,025	10.90%
<b>TOTAL READERS</b>	<b>1,340</b>	<b>1,350</b>	<b>1,318</b>	<b>1.60%</b>
<b>TOTAL CIRCULATION &amp; DOWNLOADS</b>	<b>54,803</b>	<b>56,991</b>	<b>63,353</b>	<b>15.60%</b>
CIRCULATION/DOWNLOADS PER READER	40.9	42.22	48.07	17.50%
ESTIMATED STATE POPULATION	624,358	623,989	643,077	3.00%
READERS IN PROGRAM AS PERCENTAGE OF STATE POPULATION	0.22%	0.22%	0.21%	-4.50%

Overall, the *Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired* significantly contributes to VTLIB's excellent performance in achieving its Goal 1 objectives as well as effectively reaching a targeted audience.

*Digital Literacy for Job Seekers*

Because this project provides statewide access to EBSCO’s Learning Express Library product, it fits very well under Goal 1 (Access to Resources). However, the evaluators would also like to point out that there is also ample justification for placing it under Goal 3 (Workforce Readiness). Consequently, we have chosen to report on this program under Goal 3 along with the *Job Hunt Helpers Grant Program*. In short, VTLIB expanded access to EBSCO’s Learning Express Library from five libraries to 541 libraries of all types in the State less than a year before the COVID pandemic emerged. This effort paved the way for broad access to a valuable digital job-hunt-related tool that remained accessible after almost all libraries were forced to close their doors.

*Motion Picture Public Performance License*

In an effort to enhance the ability of local libraries to offer programming for all ages and to expand access to different types of resources, VTLIB has licensed public performance rights for public libraries that enables them to legally show an extensive array of movies. Furthermore, offering licenses for all 185 public libraries in the State also opened the door to providing a 50% discount to school libraries wishing to acquire licenses.

Unfortunately, the COVID crisis impacted this program heavily. The chart below shows the number of libraries acquiring licenses, number of performances and attendance.

Motion Picture License Results					
Year	Libraries Participating	Number of Movies Shown to Adults	Number of Movies Shown to Children and Young Adults	Adults Attending	Children and Young Adults Attending
FFY 2018	154	493	576	6,639	5,708
FFY 2019	151	377	269	5,708	3,467
FFY 2020	129	70	47	765	843

In an effort to make the best of a bad situation, permission was granted to allow for outdoor showings on library grounds. Of the 117 movies shown during the 2020 - 2021 season, 42 were shown outdoors. It is hoped that this popular program will once again return to generating large audiences as in-person programming begins to be restored.




### *FiberConnect Wide Area Network (WAN)*

The FiberConnect Wide Area Network Project is an outgrowth or continuation of efforts begun under the Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP). This project affords 41 Vermont public libraries (about 22% of the total) access to high-speed Internet access at a reasonable cost. VTLIB works with the State of Vermont’s Agency of Digital Services to ensure technical support for the network and continues to assist the FiberConnect consortium in managing E-Rate applications. The program continues to be vital to many libraries in securing Internet access that provides the capacity and speed necessary to serve the public well.

### *e-Book and e-Audiobook Collection Development Grant*


This project helps subsidize the efforts of the Green Mountain Library Consortium (GMLC) in providing affordable access to e-resources. The consortium, which began in 2008 with 15 members has grown to a membership of 155 libraries of all types. While the majority of the funding to support licensing of e-books and e-audiobooks comes from member libraries, VTLIBs small subsidy helps expand and enrich the collections that are offered. This use of LSTA funds is consistent with the Goal 1 objective of providing the public with a wide array of quality resources.



Vermont Usage Stats	
Usage Dates	10/1/20 – 9/30/21
Total Portal Views	18,687 Views
Total Used Films	535 Films

**Top Used Films Include:**

- Romeo and Juliet
- Just Mercy
- Inside Out
- Selma
- The Shawshank Redemption
- Smoke Signals
- Holes
- Iron Jawed Angels
- 1917
- Harriet
- 42
- Ice on Fire (HBO Documentary)
- Gattaca
- Erin Brockovich
- Wonder
- Dead Poets Society
- Roger & Me
- Alice in Wonderland
- WALL-E
- Rabbit-Proof Fence



### *Streaming Movie Licenses for Vermont Schools*

VTLIB also negotiated streaming movie licenses for schools to help them mitigate the effect of COVID-related remote learning through a variety of funding sources as a one one-time activity, including a small amount of LSTA Grants to States dollars as well as CARES ACT funding.

### *Preserving Vermont Newspapers on Microfilm*

A small amount of LSTA funding was used to microfilm the Rutland Herald Newspaper to add to the State's extensive archive of in-state newspapers.

### **Goal 1 Conclusion - Retrospective Question A-1**

#### **A-1. To what extent did VTLIB's Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards Goal 1?**

Vermont devotes most of its LSTA resources to Goal 1. While some of the projects undertaken further multiple goals, the level of achievement reached in increasing access to resources statewide is outstanding. The highly integrated interlibrary loan/delivery system meets statewide needs that are significant in a rural state with mostly small libraries with limited resources. ABLE Library (Library for the Blind) services reach both a very targeted special needs population as well as a more general population through its large print offerings. Other smaller projects such as the *Motion Picture Performance Licensing, e-Book and e-Audio Book Collection Development Grant*, and *Preserving Vermont Newspapers on Microfilm* ensure that materials in many different formats are available. The Evaluators' conclude that the Vermont Department of Libraries has ACHIEVED Goal 1.

### ***Goal 2 Retrospective Assessment - Capacity***

***GOAL 2: Vermont libraries will have opportunities to strengthen their capacity to provide quality services and resources to all citizens.***

### **Goal 2 Description and Discussion**

Following are the titles of the projects and the total amount of LSTA FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 funding that was expended on activities undertaken in support of Goal 2.

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL</b>
<i>Continuing Education for Vermont Library Workforce (Under Access to Resources in 2018)</i>	\$216,339.37
<b>GOAL SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$216,339.37</b>

Goal 2 expenditures represent 7.54% of Vermont's total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period.

Only one project, *Continuing Education for the Vermont Library Workforce* has been reported under Goal 2 (Capacity). However, several other projects including *Building Library Capacity (Consulting and Statistics)* categorized as Goal 1 (Access to Resources) and Summer Reading Program categorized as a Goal 4 (Literacy and Lifelong Learning) project also contribute significantly to the achievement of Goal 2. Please see the discussion of these programs under Goals 1 and 4 respectively.

### *Continuing Education for the Vermont Library Workforce*

Perhaps the best word to describe VTLIB's performance in carrying out this project is agility! While the core objective of equipping Vermont library staff members with the knowledge and skills they need to offer quality library and information services remained unchanged, the methods used to carry out the objective were altered significantly, and in some regards, have been changed permanently.

The introductory paragraphs in this evaluation highlighted the rural nature of Vermont and the small size of its libraries. The directors in the majority of public libraries in the Green Mountain State lack a Master's degree in library or information science. Directors often come to their positions with little or no prior library experience and no formal training in the field. Consequently, VTLIB is faced with the ongoing challenge of ensuring that the residents of the State are served by well-trained individuals.

One way in which the SLAA has met this challenge is through its Certificate of Public Librarianship (CPL). This program certifies individuals who have completed coursework in four core areas (public library administration, collection development, cataloging, and reference) plus a supplementary class in the area of technology. Additional electives are also available.

The most impressive fact related to the implementation of the *Continuing Education* project during the pandemic was the rapidity of the pivot to a nearly fully virtual model for CPL offerings and other related staff development efforts. VTLIB staff quickly became highly proficient in using Microsoft Teams™ software, shifted funding from scholarships to attend in-person conferences to scholarships to participate in virtual conferences and webinars, and added resources such as Niche Academy to their toolbox.

A shift was also instituted in the content of the learning experiences offered. As a response to COVID, additional webinars and other virtual sessions focused on Human Resources, labor issues, and self-care. The application process for scholarships to participate in webinars offered by national organizations was streamlined to maximize the number of people involved in learning activities.

The results from these changes were outstanding. The COVID period resulted in an increase rather than a decrease both in terms of number of library staff members participating in staff development activities and in the number and breadth of topics covered. The number of CPL-related sessions increased from 51 in 2018 to 257 sessions in the 2019-2020 period.

Registrations for formal events offered by outside organizations increased from 112 to 232. VTLIB also experienced an increase in the number of non-library directors who participated in a training experience. More support staff took advantage of training and the traditional Trustee and Friends training events transitioned to an online mode.

One interviewee praised the VTLIB staff’s nimbleness in shifting to virtual learning and a web survey respondent characterized the continuing education offered as invaluable. In short, the evaluators found that the Continuing Education for the Vermont Library Workforce project was, if anything, more successful because of the pandemic than it had been in the past.

## **Goal 2 Conclusion - Retrospective Question A-1**

### **A-1. To what extent did VTLIB’s Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards Goal 2?**

While only one project, *Continuing Education for the Vermont Library Workforce* is formally listed under Goal 2, VTLIB carried out several other significant projects during the FFY 2018 - FFY 2020 time period covered by this evaluation. The most notable of these efforts that clearly contributes to the goal of building the capacity of local libraries is the appropriately titled *Building Library Capacity (Consulting and Statistics)* project which funds a variety of consulting and library development activities described in the discussion of this project under Goal 1 (Access to Resources). The consultants would have concluded that VTLIB had met its Goal 2 objectives based solely on its continuing education/staff development activity; however, the consideration of capacity building efforts carried out under Goal 1 simply underscores the fact that Vermont’s performance far exceeds the basic expectations outlined in its five-year plan. The evaluator’s conclude that the Vermont Department of Libraries has **ACHIEVED** Goal 2.

## ***Goal 3 Retrospective Assessment - Workforce Readiness***

***GOAL 3: Vermont libraries will enhance workforce readiness programs, including entrepreneurial endeavors, using materials, and services available through libraries.***

### **Goal 3 Description and Discussion**

Following are the titles of the projects and the total amount of LSTA FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 funding that was expended on activities undertaken in support of Goal 3.

#### **Goal 3 Projects & Expenditures**

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	<b>THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL</b>
<i>Job Hunt Helpers Grant Program</i>	\$2,433.51
<b>GOAL SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$2,433.51</b>

Goal 3 expenditures represent 0.08% of Vermont's total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period.

### *Job Hunt Helpers Grant Program*

Only one small project was categorized in the SPR as being directed toward the achievement of Goal 3 (Workforce Readiness). Furthermore, the *Job Hunt Helpers Grant Program* was supported with LSTA funding in only one of the three years (FFY 2018) included in this evaluation. However, it should be noted that one other project, *Digital Literacy for Job Seekers*, was funded in all three years as a Goal 1 (Access to Resources) project.

While the *Job Hunt Helpers Grant Program* was at best marginally successful in achieving its intended goal of helping library patrons search for and apply for jobs as well as identify career opportunities, VTLIB gained considerable insight from the effort. The concept behind the *Job Hunt Helpers Grant* had several positive characteristics. It represented a three-way partnership among the SLAA, the Community College of Vermont, and twelve (12) local public libraries. The idea was to involve trained students to assist library patrons in job and career search activities.

Several factors contributed to the limited success of the endeavor. A dearth of publicity about the program, a mismatch between the students/helpers skill training and the needs of job hunters, student class schedules that didn't always correspond to job hunters' availability and Vermont's low unemployment rate all contributed to lower than hoped for participation. Those who did receive assistance in 145 sessions reported in surveys that were conducted with participants that they were helped in resume preparation, conducting job searches, exploring career opportunities, filling in job applications, and in learning some computer basics. One outgrowth of the modest results of the *Job Hunt Helpers Grant* program proved to be fortuitous: VTLIB expanded access to EBSCO's Learning Express Library from five libraries to making it available to 541 libraries of all types in the State under the *Digital Literacy for Job Seekers* project less than a year before the COVID pandemic emerged. In effect, the *Job Hunt Helpers Grant's* demise after only one year paved the way for broad access to a valuable digital job-hunt-related tool that remained accessible after almost all libraries were forced to close their doors.

## **Goal 3 Conclusion - Retrospective Question A-1**

### **A-1. To what extent did VTLIB's Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards Goal 3?**

VTLIB placed very limited LSTA resources into its Goal 3 effort. Furthermore, the single project funded, the *Job Hunt Helpers Grant* program was only marginally successful. Nevertheless, it is hard to deny that some progress toward the goal of "enhancing workforce readiness programs... using materials and services available through libraries" was made when the Job Hunters Helpers Grant and Digital Literacy for Job Seekers are taken together. The evaluator's conclude that the Vermont Department of Libraries has **PARTLY ACHIEVED** Goal 3.

## Goal 4 Retrospective Assessment - Literacy and Lifelong Learning

**GOAL 4: Vermont libraries will build partnerships, programs and services that enhance access to early childhood and family literacy, digital literacy, and lifelong learning library resources, particularly to populations facing barriers to traditional library services.**

### Goal 4 Description and Discussion

Following are the titles of the projects and the total amount of LSTA FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 funding that was expended on activities undertaken in support of Goal 4.

PROJECT TITLE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL
<i>Summer Reading Program</i>	\$88,461.28
<i>Book Awards</i>	\$82,398.28
<i>Cultural Programming Grants for Public Libraries</i>	\$68,402.63
<b>GOAL SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$239,262.19</b>

Goal 4 expenditures represent 8.33% of Vermont’s total LSTA allotment for the FFY 2018 – FFY 2020 period.

Although projects undertaken in support of Goal 4 represent less than ten-percent (8.33%) of Vermont’s total LSTA expenditures, to a large degree, they define the essence of the Green Mountain State’s unique nature. The three projects: *Summer Reading Program*; *Book Awards*; and *Cultural Programming Grants for Public Libraries*, speak to the historical importance that Vermonters place on their libraries as local hubs that celebrate learning, literacy, and culture.

#### *Summer Reading Program*

Vermont’s approach to supporting summer reading in the past has been similar to what has been observed by the evaluators in many other states. It has consisted primarily of linking local libraries to the national Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP) and coordinating and subsidizing the acquisition and distribution of program materials to local libraries. However, during the evaluation period, VTLIB has expanded its efforts by adding statewide access to the Beanstack reading-tracking program and making other shifts to accommodate COVID realities such as more virtual programming, grab-and-go curbside programming, and the prevalence of outdoor as opposed to indoor programming. Vermont also extends the impact of its LSTA-funded efforts by providing additional support for summer programming using non-LSTA

sources. One librarian did a wonderful job of summing up the impact of this project in the comments they offered in the web-based survey of the library community when they said:

“The Summer Reading Program is a community builder and a way of building joy of reading as well as maintaining and increasing (reading) skills.”

### *Book Awards*

Vermont has a longstanding history of supporting several notable book award programs. While the names of the awards have changed a bit over the years, the three current programs: The Red Clover Book Award (graded school age); The Vermont Golden Dome Book Award (middle school age); and the Green Mountain Book Award (high school age) engage thousands of school children, teachers, librarians, and community members in selecting, promoting, and, most importantly, reading the award-winning books. As an example, for FFY 2020, approximately 7,400 students participated in the voting process used to select award winners. Again, one of the librarians responding to the web-based survey offered a cogent summary of the project impact by saying:

“Book awards are great motivators for the students in Vermont to expand the types of books they read and explore.”

### *Cultural Programming Grants for Public Libraries*

This project entails a longstanding collaboration between VTLIB and the Vermont Humanities Council (VHC). The centerpiece of this project has historically been a series of lectures referred to as “First Wednesdays Talks” in nine libraries geographically scattered around the entire State. Topics of the talks offer something for everyone and “First Wednesdays” has become a venerable Vermont tradition. Examples of programs for the 2021-2022 season range from Women’s Suffrage to Star Wars and from Film Noir to Why We Eat What We Eat at Thanksgiving.

	First Wednesdays Programs			
Year	Number of Talks	Number of In Person Attendees	Number of Virtual Attendees	Total Attendance
2018 - 2019	68	6,144	0	6,144
2019 - 2020	54	3,369	0	3,369
2020 - 2021	75	0	11,653	11,653

Although the pandemic curtailed the 2019 - 2020 season offerings a bit and resulted in lower overall participation, the quick pivot to virtual programming via zoom broadened the audience tremendously. Although it is difficult to precisely estimate participation because more than one

person was often watching zoom sessions from a single device, VTLIB and VHC conservatively estimate that 11,653 individuals participated either in live zoom sessions or by watching archived recorded talks. See <https://www.vermonthumanities.org/first-wednesdays/recorded-talks/>.

This program is now moving into a hybrid in-person/virtual mode for the 2021 - 2022 season and anticipates acquiring an even broader audience that includes attendees residing in Vermont and now, from well beyond the Green Mountain State's borders. Participants in the program offer the greatest endorsement of its impact:

"Fabulous! The program is a regular and tangible way... to reach out to people -- to bring what matters to all Vermonters. The range is impressive. And the way it's being delivered during these tough times is perfect -- enabling all of us to remain safe.

and,

"I think it speaks very highly of our little state that we value continuous learning about all sorts of topics. That's what keeps democracy vibrant!"

There have been several other exciting aspects to the *Cultural Programming Grants for Public Libraries* project during the evaluation period. In the fall of 2020, the Vermont Humanities Council adopted the state's Center for the Book affiliated with the Library of Congress. VTLIB had previously supported a local non-profit that served as the Center for the Book. The Center for the Book's new home with VTLIB's premiere collaborator promises great things for the future. VTLIB provided funding to the Vermont Humanities Council and there is great promise and opportunities explored through this continuing and strengthened partnership.

Finally, in what may be Vermont's best example of outstanding success in the midst of a trying situation, VTLIB and VHC partnered to sponsor the zoom appearance of acclaimed author Angie Thomas as part of the "Vermont Reads" program. Ms. Thomas' presentation, *The Hate U Give* netted a participation of somewhere in the neighborhood of 400 (this is 400 logins many of which likely had multiple participants). Students in the State were given the opportunity to participate in a students only conversation with the author the following day. Since participation in this event was on the basis of classrooms as opposed to individuals, it is estimated that approximately 2,000 students participated. In addition to live-stream participants, the video of the programming had 125 video views after the event.

#### **Goal 4 Conclusion - Retrospective Question A-1**

##### **A-1. To what extent did VTLIB's Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards Goal 4?**

Vermont's efforts in achieving Goal 4 can be described as small but mighty! VTLIB expended an average of under \$80,000 per year on all three of the Goal 4 projects. Nevertheless, each of these projects had an even greater impact than anticipated as VTLIB and VHC staff creatively and quickly moved to reimagine how the programs could be delivered. The evaluator's conclude that the Vermont Department of Libraries has **ACHIEVED** and exceeded the objectives of Goal 4.



## Retrospective Assessment Questions A-2 and A-3

### Retrospective Question A-2

**A-2. To what extent did VTLIB's Five-Year Plan activities achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?**

The Vermont Department of Libraries activities during the period evaluated have impacted four of the Measuring Success focal areas. They are: Information Access, Institutional Capacity, Lifelong Learning, and Economic and Employment development. While no specific projects were directed at either the Human Resources or Civic Engagement focal areas, a strong argument can be made that many of the activities undertaken under Vermont's Literacy and Lifelong Learning goal (Goal 4) also promote Civic Engagement.

Efforts related to Information Access were robust, while those focusing on Economic and Employment Development were meager. Several projects undertaken took on more of an Institutional Capacity focus as the pandemic unfolded.

"Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources" was the intent most frequently cited and also accounted for a significant portion of Vermont's LSTA expenditures. When combined with the closely related "improve users' ability to discover information resources," these two intents were present in three of the four most costly projects undertaken: *Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER*; *Statewide Databases for Public, School, and Academic Libraries*; and *Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired*. At the other end of the cost spectrum, VTLIB realized a tremendous return of investment in its three Lifelong Learning focused projects (*Summer Reading Program*, *Book Awards*, and *Cultural Programming for Vermont Public Libraries*). These projects had a notable effect in the "Improve users' formal education" and "Improve users' general knowledge and skills" at a very modest cost.

### Retrospective Question A-3

**A-3. Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for VTLIB's Five-Year Plan activities? (Yes/No)**

Only one project, Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired (ABLE Library), which is Vermont's implementation of the Library of Congress' National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled program, qualifies as being a substantial focus on the basis of percentage of expenditure specified by IMLS in the evaluation guidelines. While many other projects undertaken by VTLIB have had significant impacts on specified groups including the library workforce and both children aged 0-5 and school-aged youth aged 6-17, these additional

projects and activities either target general audiences or fall substantially below the 10% expenditure threshold. The ABLE Library accounts for 11.41% of LSTA program expenditures in the period that includes FFY 2018, FFY 2019, and FFY 2020 and reaches several categories of individuals with disabling conditions. Primary among these categories are individuals with visual impairments; however recent changes in eligibility requirements and the certification process have resulted in additional clients with other print and reading disabilities.

Vermont's LSTA expenditures also have a significant impact in the area of professional and staff development. For the period from FFY 2018 - FFY 2020, expenditures aimed at the development of the library workforce amounted to 7.54% of the total.

## **Process Questions B-1, B-2, and B-3**

### **Process Question B-1**

#### **B-1. How has VTLIB used any data from the State Program Report (SPR) and elsewhere (e.g., Public Libraries Survey) to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan?**

Data and information gathered in preparation for submitting the annual SPR in addition to statistics reported in the Public Libraries Survey (PLS) is used periodically to assess the state library agency's progress. As a result of this review, some adjustments have been made at the activity level to reflect actions that have shown themselves to be more or less effective in achieving the overarching goals. SPR data has also been shared with specific outside evaluators, including QualityMetrics LLC, in their roles in evaluating Vermont's implementation of the LSTA Grants to States program and other programs and initiatives.

### **Process Question B-2**

#### **B-2. Specify any modifications VTLIB made to the Five-Year Plan. What was the reason for this change?**

No formal changes or amendments were made to the Five-Year LSTA Plan since it was submitted to IMLS in June 2017; however, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered how some specific activities were carried out and, in a few cases, prevented VTLIB from fully achieving the results that were originally envisioned. Nevertheless, the goals specified in the Plan remained in place and served as guiding principles toward progress.

### **Process Question B-3**

#### **B-3. How and with whom has VTLIB shared data from the SPR and from other evaluation resources? How has VTLIB used the last Five-Year Evaluation to inform data collected for the new Five-Year Evaluation? How has VTLIB used this information throughout this five-year cycle?**

Data derived from the State Program Report (SPR) is used both internally for planning and evaluation purposes and is indirectly shared with the Vermont Agency of Administration and

indirectly with legislators through periodic reports from the Vermont Department of Libraries. SPR and PLS data and information has also been incorporated into the Department of Libraries' annual report, which serves to inform the library community, State government officials and federal agencies like the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS), and the general public regarding VTLIB's efforts to achieve the goals outlined in the 2018-2022 Five-Year LSTA Plan. SPR data has also been shared with outside evaluators including QualityMetrics LLC in their role as independent evaluators of the LSTA Grants to States program.

## **Methodology Questions C-1, C-2, C-3, and C-4**

### **Methodology Question C-1**

#### **C-1. Identify how VTLIB implemented an independent Five-Year Evaluation using the criteria described in the section of this guidance document called Selection of an Independent Evaluator.**

To ensure rigorous and objective evaluation of the Vermont Department of Libraries' (VTLIB) implementation of the LSTA Grants to States program, VTLIB, in cooperation with eight other state library administrative agencies (SLAAs) in the northeast United States, participated in the issuance of a joint Request for Proposals (RFP) for a "Cooperative Library Services and Technology Act Five-Year Plan Evaluation 2018-2022" through the Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast (COSLINE). The RFP was issued on June 14, 2021 with proposals due by July 12, 2021.

As a result of a competitive bidding process, QualityMetrics LLC, a library consulting firm headquartered in Silver Spring Maryland, was awarded the contract to conduct the independent LSTA evaluation. QualityMetrics LLC does not have a role in carrying out other LSTA-funded activities and is independent of those who are being evaluated or who might be favorably or adversely affected by the evaluation results.

QualityMetrics LLC has in-depth evaluation experience and demonstrated professional competency in conducting LSTA Grants to States evaluations. QualityMetrics Director and Chief Executive Officer Dr. Martha Kyrillidou, carried out more than 20 such evaluations for the 2013-2017 cycle. In addition, QualityMetrics associate consultant, Bill Wilson, has been part of more than 50 LSTA evaluations in each five-year cycle since 2002 both as a partner in Himmel & Wilson, Library Consultants and as a research consultant with QualityMetrics.

Principal consultant Dr. Martha Kyrillidou has deep experience in library evaluation over her 22 years of service at the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). Dr. Kyrillidou has taught Research Methods and Assessment, and Evaluation courses at the University of Maryland and at Kent State University and has extensive practical experience in mixed methods, evaluation

and outcomes assessment. Martha is a current member of the Library Statistics Working Group (LSWG), chair of the NISO Z39.7 standard, and mentoring the next generation of public library staff and evaluators.

Mr. Wilson has extensive experience with federal funding programs for libraries dating back to the 1970s and interactions with state library administrative agencies since he served as Wisconsin's State Librarian in the 1990s. Mr. Wilson has also completed extensive graduate/doctoral-level coursework in statistics and research methods.

## **Methodology Question C-2**

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

QualityMetrics, LLC deployed a mixed methods protocol for data collection that is multi-faceted and rigorous. Reviewing demographic data, quantitative PLS data, and State Program Report (SPR) data formed the basis of our knowledge from the stage of responding to the RFP for an independent evaluator and throughout the evaluation process. Providing a cloud-based storage space for VTLIB to deposit additional data and files and reflections on the program was the basis of our initial interaction. After conducting an initial Zoom conference call with representatives of the Vermont Department of Libraries at the beginning of the evaluation process and a second phone call to discuss the agencies self-reflection on whether goals have been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved, the evaluators stayed in regular touch (monthly sessions) with the agency as the evaluation team was gathering data. In addition to updating VTLIB leadership on progress, the sessions were used to resolve emerging questions and to solicit additional relevant information. Data gathering included (a) interviews with agency staff members, (b) interviews with project managers for various SPR reported projects and activities, (c) focus group discussions with project teams, (d) focus group discussions with project and activity beneficiaries, (e) a broad based short survey for library staff and stakeholders with some knowledge and engagement with LSTA funded activities collecting primarily qualitative contextual information about past activities and future needs.

Researchers and evaluators across the globe are adjusting to the new realities that accompany the pandemic. The technical note below is merely an example.

COVID-19 presented special circumstances and a number of considerations had to be taken into account. The crisis brought the imperative of changing how evaluation work is done and how we engage policymakers, programme managers and beneficiaries as restrictions on travel and 'social distancing' are expected to last.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> OECD/DAC and IEO/UNDP (2020) Guidance Note: Good practices during COVID-19; UNICEF Evaluation Office (2020) Technical Note: Response of the UNICEF Evaluation Function to the COVID-19 Crisis; WFP

While no on-site visit to the State Library was conducted during this evaluation period, both of the primary investigators for QualityMetrics (Dr. Martha Kyrillidou and Mr. William Wilson) had visited the Vermont Department of Libraries in Montpelier, VT as part of the 2013-2017 LSTA evaluation cycle and consequently were somewhat familiar with VTLIB's operation. Virtual (Zoom) one-on-one interviews were held with the former State Librarian, with the Interim State Librarian and with other key staff engaged in LSTA and in specific projects carried out under the LSTA Five-Year Plan. The Five-Year Evaluation is a summative assessment and as such the availability of the SPR data was extremely useful more so than other times.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 circumstances have strengthened the state library agency role -- during a time of crisis the profession and the communities were seeking advice and often turned to the state library for answers. Many SLAAs responded by holding frequent and regular statewide community meetings with various groups which elevated the importance of the LSTA activities even when they were disrupted by the pandemic. Creative solutions were identified in most instances as most programs had to turn into virtual delivery for most of the pandemic period. In some ways, the record of virtual programming is more evident and its impact more readily documented. However, we do run the danger of minimizing the adverse effects on marginalized communities which often are more difficult to reach during times of crisis such as COVID-19 presented.

The toll on the mental health of our communities has also been evident as these restrictions are establishing new norms for interacting in person. Student learning and well-being have been concerns as the education life cycle was disrupted. Opportunities to help students catch up with unfinished learning were plentiful and many state library agencies, including VTLIB, have adjusted or augmented their database offerings to better support home-schooled children and teens. Monitoring community behaviors took place frequently during the pandemic often resulting in people feeling over-surveyed in many instances.

A web-based survey targeting the library community was conducted between October 26, 2021 and November 9, 2021. The survey provided some supplementary quantitative information as well as considerable qualitative information. Additional corroborative evidence from comments collected in the survey served to triangulate the evidence gathered.

Validity and reliability analysis reflect a positivist worldview and in a qualitative naturalistic approach they are being redefined with some divergent views on whether and how one ensures quality and rigor in qualitative inquiry. The notion that naturalistic inquiry needs to exhibit quality, rigor, and trustworthiness is more widespread nowadays.

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Office of Evaluation (2020) Technical Note for {Planning and Conducting Evaluations During COVID-19; UNFPA Evaluation Office (2020) Adapting evaluations to the COVID-19 pandemic; UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (2020) Event planning and implementation during COVID-19; ILO Evaluation Office (2020) Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO; FAO Office of Evaluations (2020) Risk analysis and guidance for the management and conduct of evaluations during international and national level COVID-19 crisis and restrictions.

The evaluators engaged in numerous conversations through Zoom and phone interviews. The quality and rigor of the phone interviews in the LSTA evaluation of VTLIB's LSTA implementation has been enhanced by references to external website links, google maps, internal triangulation and, in some instances, by asking interviewees to allow the conversation to be recorded with assurances for confidentiality by the evaluators. Quality and rigor were also enhanced by having two evaluators attend most focus groups and interviews. Shared note-taking was available in real time through shared Google Docs and Google Drive. This approach has allowed evaluators to refine their inquiry and tailor it as knowledge of VTLIB's LSTA program was accumulating from one interaction to the next. Recorded conversations also allow the evaluators to reflect and refine their interpretations in a reliable manner. The validity of the inquiry was strengthened with the informed selection of the subjects by the VTLIB leadership team and staff.

### **Methodology Question C-3**

**C-3. Describe the stakeholders involved in the various stages of the Five-Year Evaluation. How did QualityMetrics in cooperation with VTLIB engage them?**

Numerous small-group virtual sessions and telephone interviews were conducted with librarians and other persons with knowledge of LSTA-funded initiatives in Vermont. Oftentimes, these interactions were enhanced by virtual tours of their library buildings and physical facilities through Google Maps. One-on-one interviews were also conducted with consumers of the Library for the Blind and Print Disabled program.

The focus groups and interviews provided both qualitative evidence and context that supplemented a review of agency-supplied statistical data and information and data submitted in the form of the State Program Reports (SPRs).

Interviewees shared their knowledge of LSTA utilization, enhancing interactions and depth and quality of the conversations. Furthermore, principal investigators Martha Kyrrilidou and Bill Wilson conducted both separate and joint interviews and group sessions and shared and discussed their observations in order to develop a shared understanding of the meaning of the library experience in Vermont and how it was supported by the State Library with LSTA support. Both investigators participated in many of the agency interviews, allowing for the concept of triangulation to be implemented as evaluators debriefed and compared interpretations and understandings.

### **Methodology Question C-4**

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

The results will be used to inform the next LSTA planning process; Vermont is a small state and achieved to serve effectively a large number of the population during the pandemic with programs that have general appeal bringing together public and school libraries more closely than in earlier years. Results and recommendations for the future plan will be shared by the new State Librarian with all the stakeholders and partners in the state to continue to strengthen the collaborative fabric among libraries in this state. The report will be posted on the agency website and on the IMLS website and will inform future legislative efforts related to libraries.

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A: Acronyms

ABLE - Audio, Braille, Large Print, and Electronic Books - Vermont's Talking Books Library  
ACS - American Community Survey  
ALA - American Library Association  
ALS - Academic Libraries Survey  
ARL - Association of Research Libraries  
BARD - Braille and Audio Reading Download  
BTOP - Broadband Technology Opportunity Program  
CCV - Community College of Vermont  
CLOVER - Collaborative Libraries of Vermont  
COSLINE - Council of State Library Agencies in the Northeast  
COVID-19 - Coronavirus Disease 2019  
CPL - Certificate for Public Librarianship  
CSLP - Collaborative Summer Library Program  
DB - Digital Book  
DOD - Duplication on Demand  
DPLA - Digital Public Library of America  
E-Rate - Schools and libraries universal service support program  
EISI - Elementary/Secondary Information System  
FTE - Full-Time Equivalent  
GMBA - Green Mountain Book Award  
GMLC - Green Mountain Library Consortium  
ILL - Interlibrary Loan  
ILS - Integrated Library System  
IMLS - Institute of Museum and Library Services  
LOC - Library of Congress  
LSTA - Library Services and Technology Act  
LSWG - Library Statistics Working Group  
NAAL - National Assessment of Adult Literacy  
NCES - National Center for Educational Statistics  
NLS - National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled  
OBE - Outcome-Based Evaluation  
OCLC - Online Computer Library Center  
OPAC - Online public access catalog  
PLS - Public Libraries Survey  
POP - Patron Outreach Project  
RFP - Request for Proposal



ROI - Return-on-investment  
SLAA - State Library Administrative Agency  
SPR - State Program Report  
STEAM - Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics  
STEM - Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math  
VHC - Vermont Humanities Council  
VTLIB - Department of Libraries  
WAN - Wide-Area Network

## Appendix B: Interviewees/ Focus Groups

	Stakeholder interviews and focus groups	Title	Day
#1	Jason Broughton	Former State Librarian	8/23/2021
#2	Bruce Post, Chair, and members Maxie Ewins and Deb Grandquist	Members of Library Board of Trustees	8/24/2021
#3	Board of Libraries		8/24/2021
#4	Leadership team	Three members present	8/26/2021
#5	Janette Shaffer	Assistant State Librarian/Advancement	9/29/2021
#6	Tom McMurdo	Interim State Librarian	10/1/2021
#7	ABLE Library Board		10/21/2021
#8	Library Advancement Consultants (Joy Worland, Jonathan Clark, Karen Gravlin) and division assistant Jennifer Johnson	Consultants	10/26/2021

## Appendix C: Bibliography of Documents Reviewed

### State Agency Sources

- SPR data (FFY 2018-2020)
- Stats Over Time (FY 2018 - 2020)
- Agency website and social media
- LSTA Plan 2018-2022
- LSTA Evaluation 2013-2017

### Federal Government Publications

#### Federal Agency Data Sources

- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [State Program Report \(SPR\) report](#)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [Public Library Statistics](#)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [State Profiles](#)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [“Grants to States” Conference](#)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services, [State Library Administrative Agency Survey](#)
- National Center for Education Statistics, [Academic Libraries](#)
- National Center for Education Statistics, [Elementary and Secondary Information System](#)
- United States Census Bureau, [Decennial Census](#) (April 1, 2020)

#### Evaluation Resources and COVID-19

- OECD/DAC and IEO/UNDP (2020) [Guidance Note: Good practices during COVID-19.](#)
- UNICEF Evaluation Office (2020) [Technical Note: Response of the UNICEF Evaluation Function to the COVID-19 Crisis.](#)
- WFP Office of Evaluation (2020) [Technical Note for Planning and Conducting Evaluations During COVID-19.](#)
- UNFPA Evaluation Office (2020) [Adapting evaluations to the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)
- UNDP Independent Evaluation Office (2020) [Event planning and implementation during COVID-19.](#)
- ILO Evaluation Office (2020) [Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO.](#)
- FAO Office of Evaluations (2020) [Risk analysis and guidance for the management and conduct of evaluations during international and national level COVID-19 crisis and restrictions.](#)

#### Other Resources

- Ethel Himmel and William J. Wilson. The Functions and Roles of State Library Agencies. American Library Association, Chicago, 2000.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. [Functions and Roles of State Libraries: 2000 and 2020.](#) Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services.

- The Institute of Museum and Library Services. (2021). [The Use and Cost of Public Library Materials: Trends Before the COVID-19 Pandemic](#). Washington, DC: The Institute.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. [Understanding the Social Wellbeing Impacts of the Nation's Libraries and Museums](#). 2021 Report. Washington DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. [Functions and Roles of State Libraries: 2000 and 2020](#). Washington, DC: Institute of Museum and Library Services.
- Measures that Matter: [Workforce Development Literature Review](#), January 12, 2021.
- Pelczar, M., Frehill, L. M., Nielsen, E, Kaiser, A., Hudson, J., & Wan, T. (2021). [Characteristics of Public Libraries in the United States: Results from the FY 2019 Public Libraries Survey](#). Institute of Museum and Library Services: Washington, D.C. Results from the SDC E-Resources Survey (received January 2022).
- Sarah Mervosh, "[The pandemic hurt these students the most](#)." In print "Pandemic widened U.S. Educational Gap into a Gulf, Research Suggests." *New York Times*, July 28, 2021, Section A, Page 13.
- The School Librarian Investigation: Decline or Evolution? <https://libslide.org/>

# Appendix D: Focus Group Questions

## Focus groups

### General Questions

1. What stands out as being the most effective use of LSTA in Vermont over the last three years?
2. Are there specific examples of projects that you think were the most impactful on the lives of the citizens of Vermont?
3. Are there specific changes in how LSTA funds should be expended in the future? Are there new or emerging needs that are unmet that need to be addressed?

### Potential Follow-up Questions

1. What type of programs work for library patrons and staff, in general?
2. What type of programs work for public library patrons, school and academic library clientele, and library staff specifically?
3. What do non-participating libraries and borderline participants need to be able to participate in, grant funded projects or statewide programs?
4. How will the library patrons and library staff be satisfied with the delivery of services?
5. What programs will result in cost savings for participating libraries?

### Outcome Questions

1. Will more patrons use the library services because of the grant programs?
2. Will there be an increase in community involvement in relation to the grant programs?
3. Will customer service improve due to staff training from LSTA funded events?
4. Will the statewide programs enhance libraries' abilities to serve patrons?

## Interview guidelines

1. Introductions (include that you are working for QualityMetrics, a library consulting firm headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland, established in 2016). Ask them to tell you a bit about themselves.
2. Ask about their familiarity with the LSTA program. If they are unfamiliar you can provide some or all of the below info -
  - a. *The Library Services and Technology Act's (LSTA) "Grants to States" program is the single largest source of ongoing federal funding for libraries. Many states spend funds on a combination of statewide initiatives and on subgrants awarded to individual libraries to enable them to launch innovative efforts or to extend services to populations that are difficult to reach.*
  - b. *The LSTA program requires that each state conduct an evaluation of its LSTA program every five years. These evaluations are overseen by the Institute of*

*Museum and Library Services but are conducted by independent evaluators. QualityMetrics was selected to conduct the state-level evaluations for nine states in the Northeast and our company is also working with more than a dozen additional states and territories. The results of our review are due to be submitted to IMLS in March of 2022.*

3. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT WORK FOR THE SLAA (who manage a project):
  - a. Ask them to talk about the particular grant/s they worked with. Allow them to lead the conversation in an exploratory fashion. Ask follow up questions.
  - b. Identify where there are materials or data from their projects that it would be useful for us to see.
4. FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT WORK FOR THE SLAA (high level stakeholder):
  - a. Go through the plan goal by goal, remind them of the goal wording and the percent of funds the state spent on it, get their reflections on progress toward each goal.
  - b. Are there any future needs we should be emphasizing in the evaluation?
5. FOR SLAA STAFF on specific projects:
  - a. Ask them to talk about the particular programs they are responsible for
  - b. Let them know the data available (SPR, output, etc.) and verify that there is no other data or materials they have that would be helpful to us. If they only listed outputs in the SPR outcomes data, ask about plans for outcome data in the future.
  - c. What do you see as the needs moving forward for the next seven years?
6. ALL: What impact have you seen LSTA dollars have on your state?
7. ALL: Is there anything you think we should have asked that we didn't?

# Appendix E: Web-Survey Instrument

Vermont LSTA Survey 2021

## WELCOME

Every five years, each state library administrative agency (SLAA) in the nation (the Vermont Department of Libraries [VTLIB] is Vermont's official SLAA) is required to conduct an independent evaluation of its implementation of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) "Grants to States" program. This evaluation must be submitted to qualify for ongoing Federal funding.

Following close on the heels of the evaluation is the federal requirement for the submission of a new state-level five-year plan for the LSTA program. QualityMetrics, LLC, a library consulting firm that specializes in evaluation and planning, is carrying out the evaluation.

QualityMetrics has been gathering information and data from a number of different sources including the State Program Report (SPR) that VTLIB submits annually to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), internal statistical and narrative reports, survey data, and personal interviews with VTLIB staff as well as with representatives of the library community in the state. We'd like your help in assessing the impact of the LSTA program on your library and on the people that your library serves.

You are invited to share your thoughts and ideas by answering three short questions. The survey should take you no more than five to ten minutes to complete. The first question asks you to look back over the last few years and to consider how the LSTA program has benefitted libraries and library users. Second, we'd like to invite you to think about the future and to suggest new ways in which you think LSTA funds should be invested in the years to come. Finally, we want to give you an opportunity to offer any other observations about Vermont's LSTA program (positive or negative). Thank you in advance for helping the Vermont Department of Libraries serve your community better!

## BACKGROUND

Vermont receives approximately one-million dollars in LSTA Grants to States funding each year. The largest portion of this funding (about 87%) has been allocated to support of programs under the category of Access to Resources such as Statewide Resource Sharing including CLOVER and the courier service, consultant services, the ABLE Library (services to the blind and

individuals with print disabilities), and licensing of databases for public, school and academic libraries.

The second largest portion (9%) of the budget supports Literacy and Lifelong Learning including programs such as the Summer Reading Program, book awards, and cultural programming grants for libraries.

The third largest portion (about 4%) supports Strengthening Library Capacity through continuing education and staff development for librarians and library staff.

A small amount has also been allocated in recent years to support Workforce Readiness with programs such as the Digital Literacy for Job Seekers program.

1) Think back over the past three years (2018, 2019, and 2020). Which, if any, of the LSTA-supported programs mentioned above have had the greatest impact on your library and on the people your library serves? How is library service in your community better because of the investment of LSTA funds?

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## LOOKING FORWARD

2) Look ahead to the five years that will be covered in the next LSTA Plan (2023 - 2027). Are there changes in the way that LSTA dollars are invested that you think would significantly improve library services in Vermont? If so, what are they and why do you think that the change(s) would make a difference. (Note that LSTA funding cannot be used for construction and other building improvements or for advocacy purposes.)

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OTHER COMMENTS

3) Please feel free to offer any additional comments about Vermont's LSTA program. What do you like or dislike about the program? What could be improved? (Note that your responses are confidential, and comments will not be identified with an individual or with a specific library.)

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OPTIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

4) The library that I represent is:

- A public library
- A school library
- A community library
- An academic library
- A special library
- Other (Please specify below.)

If you responded "Other" to the question above, please specify the type of library you represent in the text box provided below.

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5) My role in the library that I represent is:

- Director

- Manager or Department Head
- Youth Services Librarian
- Adult Services Librarian
- Technical Services Librarian
- Technology Specialist
- Library Trustee
- Other (Please specify below.)

If you responded "Other" to the question above, please specify your role in the library you represent in the text box provided below.

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Thank You!

Thank you for taking our survey. Your response is very important to us.



## Appendix G: Targeted Audiences Crosswalk Table

VERMONT Target Population Served	Targeted Audiences										
	Library Workforce (current and future)	Individuals Living Below the Poverty Line	Individuals who are unemployed/underemployed	Ethnic or Minority Populations	Immigrants/Refugees	Individuals with Disabilities	Families	Children (aged 0-5)	School-aged Youth (aged 6-17)	General (aged 18-64)	Senior (aged 65+)
	YES										
1.1 Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER											
1.2 Building Library Capacity (Consulting and Statistics)	YES										
1.3 Statewide Databases for Public, School and Academic Libraries											
1.4 Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired and to State Institutions					YES	YES		YES	YES	YES	YES
1.5 Digital Literacy for Job-Seekers		YES				YES			YES	YES	
1.6 Continuing Education for Vermont Library Workforce	YES										
1.7 Motion Picture Public Performance License											
1.8 FiberConnect Wide Area Network (WAN)											
1.9 e-Book and e-Audiobook Collection Development Grant											
1.10 Preserving Vermont Newspapers on Microfilm											
2.1 Continuing Education for Vermont Library Workforce (Under Access to Resources in 2018)	YES										
3.1 Job Hunt Helpers Grant Program		YES				YES			YES	YES	
4.1 Summer Reading Program							YES	YES	YES		
4.2 Book Awards								YES	YES		
4.3 Cultural Programming Grants for Public Libraries											

## Appendix H: Expenditure Tables

VERMONT LSTA PROJECT EXPENDITURE SUMMARY											
	State Goal Short Title	PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2018 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2019 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2020 LSTA EXPENDITURE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE WITHIN GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LSTA EXPENDITURES
Goal 1	Access to Resources	Statewide Resource Sharing and CLOVER	X	X	X	\$214,522.26	\$276,195.20	\$354,698.18	\$845,415.64	36.02%	29.45%
		Building Library Capacity (Consulting and Statistics)	X	X	X	\$206,327.38	\$147,024.42	\$145,393.01	\$498,744.81	21.25%	17.37%
		Statewide Databases for Public, School and Academic Libraries	X	X	X	\$172,816.45	\$111,912.75	\$129,828.02	\$414,557.22	17.66%	14.44%
		Library Services to the Visually and Physically Impaired and to State Institutions	X	X	X	\$106,904.53	\$103,107.95	\$117,504.53	\$327,517.01	13.95%	11.41%
		Digital Literacy for Job-Seekers	X	X	X	\$47,433.51	\$34,307.28	\$37,664.94	\$119,405.73	5.09%	4.16%
		Motion Picture Public Performance License	X	X	X	\$21,160.54	\$15,248.97	\$12,516.05	\$48,925.56	2.08%	1.70%
		FiberConnect Wide Area Network (WAN)	X	X	X	\$8,962.29	\$12,944.67	\$21,288.79	\$43,195.75	1.84%	1.50%
		e-Book and e-Audiobook Collection Development Grant		X	X	\$0.00	\$11,220.00	\$11,220.00	\$22,440.00	0.96%	0.78%
		Streaming Movie Licenses for VT Schools (Partially LSTA and Partially CARES Act Funded)			X	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$17,506.50	\$17,506.50	0.75%	0.61%
		Preserving Vermont Newspapers on Microfilm	X			\$9,549.29	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$9,549.29	0.41%	0.33%
		Continuing Education for Vermont Library Workforce (Placed 2018 under Goal 2)	X	X	X	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%	0.00%
		<b>GOAL SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$787,676.25</b>	<b>\$711,961.24</b>	<b>\$847,620.02</b>	<b>\$2,347,257.51</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>81.77%</b>
	State Goal Short Title	PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2018 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2019 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2020 LSTA EXPENDITURE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE WITHIN GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LSTA EXPENDITURES
Goal 2	Capacity	Continuing Education for Vermont Library Workforce (Under Access to Resources in 2018)	X	X	X	\$73,184.29	\$67,345.21	\$75,809.87	\$216,339.37	100.00%	7.54%
		<b>GOAL SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$73,184.29</b>	<b>\$67,345.21</b>	<b>\$75,809.87</b>	<b>\$216,339.37</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>7.54%</b>
	State Goal Short Title	PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2018 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2019 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2020 LSTA EXPENDITURE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE WITHIN GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LSTA EXPENDITURES
Goal 3	Workforce Readiness	Job Hunt Helpers Grant Program	X			\$2,433.51	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$2,433.51	100.00%	0.08%
		<b>GOAL SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$2,433.51</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$2,433.51</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>0.08%</b>
	State Goal Short Title	PROJECT TITLE/ Activities	FFY 2018	FFY 2019	FFY 2020	FFY 2018 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2019 LSTA EXPENDITURE	FFY 2020 LSTA EXPENDITURE	THREE YEAR (FFY 2018, FFY 2019, FFY 2020) EXPENDITURE TOTAL	PERCENTAGE EXPENDITURE WITHIN GOAL	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL LSTA EXPENDITURES
Goal 4	Literacy and Lifelong Learning	Summer Reading Program	X	X	X	\$20,736.37	\$45,834.88	\$21,890.03	\$88,461.28	36.97%	3.08%
		Book Awards	X	X	X	\$16,954.53	\$41,393.56	\$24,050.19	\$82,398.28	34.44%	2.87%
		Cultural Programming Grants for Public Libraries	X	X	X	\$15,730.05	\$17,941.11	\$34,731.47	\$68,402.63	28.59%	2.38%
		<b>GOAL SUBTOTAL</b>				<b>\$53,420.95</b>	<b>\$105,169.55</b>	<b>\$80,671.69</b>	<b>\$239,262.19</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>8.33%</b>
		LSTA PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION		X	X	\$0.00	\$36,558.00	\$28,799.45	\$65,357.45	100.00%	2.28%
		<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>\$916,715.00</b>	<b>\$921,034.00</b>	<b>\$1,032,901.03</b>	<b>\$2,870,650.03</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	

# Appendix I: Web-Survey Report

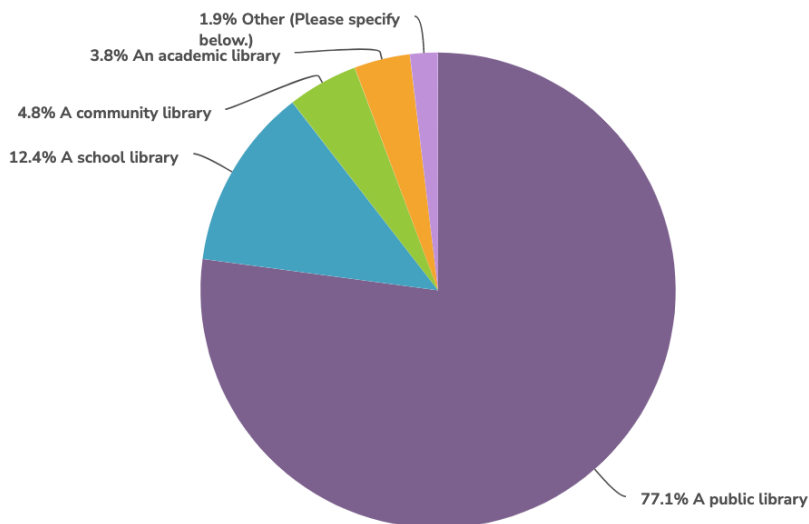
## Vermont LSTA Survey Summary

[https://reporting.alchemer.com/r/71852\\_61892bf343f556.24319406](https://reporting.alchemer.com/r/71852_61892bf343f556.24319406)

### Findings

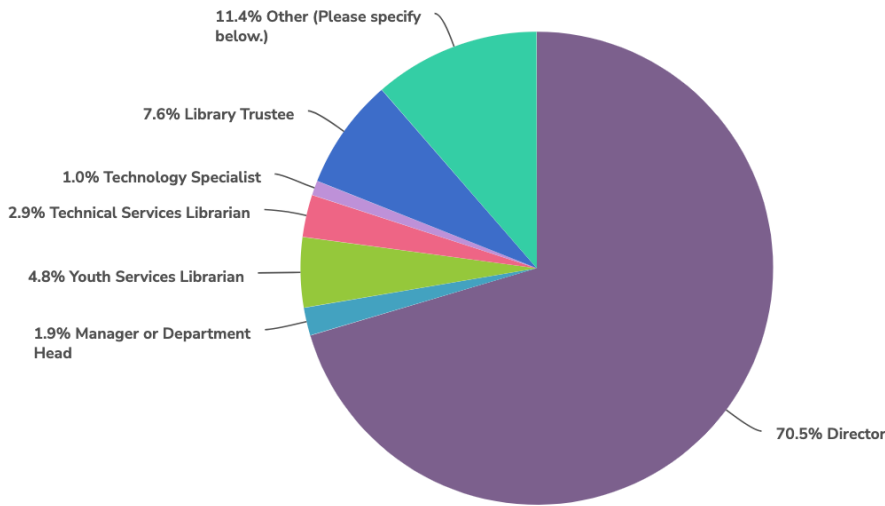
Two hundred and forty-one individuals responded to the Vermont State Library LSTA evaluation web survey. Of the total respondents, one hundred and four fully completed the survey. Eighty-one (representing 77.1 percent of the total respondents) were in public libraries. Thirteen individuals were in a school library, five individuals were in a community library, four individuals were in an academic library, and two individuals indicated “other” libraries. Figure 1 shows the breakdown of types of libraries respondents work in.

**Figure 1. The type of library in which respondents work**



Seventy-four (70.5 percent) of the respondents identified themselves as library directors. Two (1.9 percent) identified themselves as a manager or department head. Five (4.8 percent) indicated they were youth services librarians. Three individuals indicated they were a technical services librarian and another individual indicated they were a technology specialist. Eight (7.6 percent) indicated they were library trustees. Twelve (11.4 percent) indicated “other” roles within their library. Figure 2 below shows the breakdown of roles of respondents within their library.

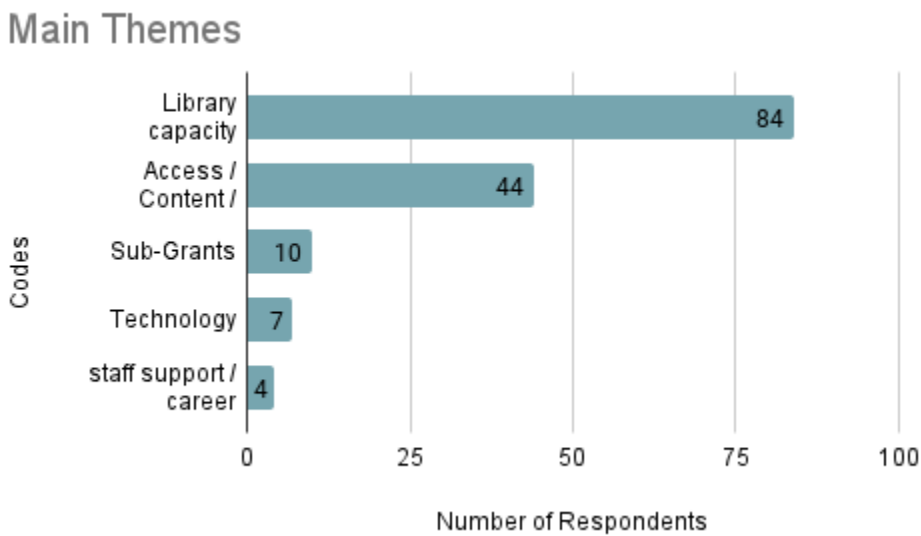
**Figure 2. Role of respondent within their library**



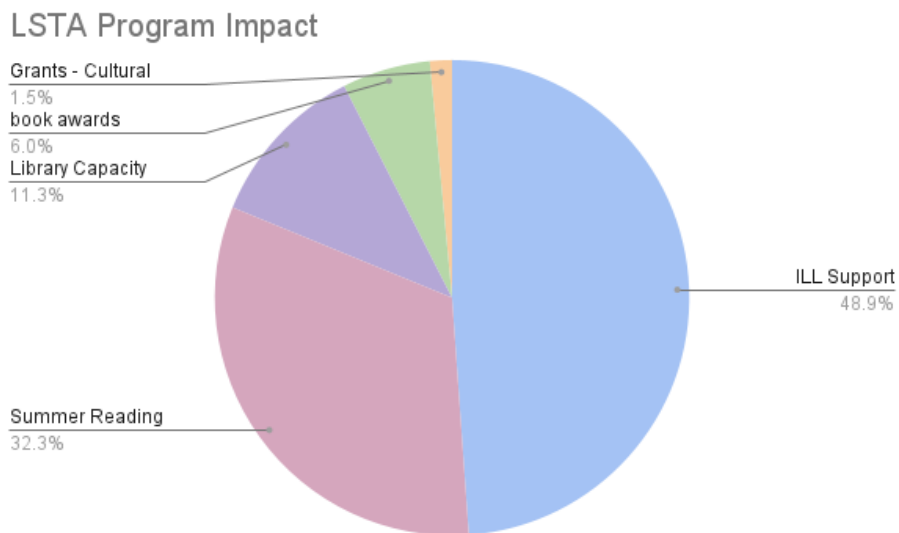
### Looking Back

When asked to indicate LSTA programs that have been the most successful at their respective libraries, several were mentioned multiple times. General themes throughout the comments are shown in figure 3 below. Figure 4 shows LSTA program impact by percentage of respondents, further discussion of these programs continues below.

**Figure 3. Main Themes discussed by respondents.**



**Figure 4. LSTA Program Impact.**



The most popular LSTA programs indicated were interlibrary loan services like Clover, Courier, and ABLE. Of the total respondents, sixty-five individuals mentioned the positive impact that the interlibrary loan services have had on their respective communities and patrons. Some comments on the positive impact of these services include:

*The CLOVER and courier services have had a huge impact on our patrons. Because of these services, we were able to join the Catamount Network and supply our patrons with far more items than our small library could provide any other way. I truly think subsidizing the courier and organizing CLOVER is resource sharing at its best.*

*The ILL services of the ABLE library are also very important to our patrons, as we have a small but very well-read group of patrons who utilize a large print deposit library that is offered by ABLE.*

*The courier service and interlibrary loan is essential to us. As a small library, the access that interlibrary loan provides our patrons helps us to ensure an equity in service to that of larger libraries.*

*Always, but especially through these pandemic years we have relied on CLOVER to help us meet the needs of our patrons. WE especially relied on this service as there was an increase in the number of parents homeschooling their children. WE were able to support their curriculum needs through Clover, as well as our regular patrons who increased their usage because it was harder to get to the library.*



Forty-three respondents indicated that the Summer Reading Program has been vital to their community to encourage literacy throughout the summer. Some feedback on this program includes:

*The summer reading program helps the library engage with the children and parents in the community during those crucial summer months when the schools are closed.*

*The Summer Reading Program has inspired young people to read during the summer months and this I have been told by educators helps prevent diminished reading skills during the summer vacation.*

*Our community benefits greatly from this due to our geographic location and the lack of extra curricular activities available in our community. The summer reading program is well attended.*

*In addition, over the past three summers our library has been able to provide engaging programs and theme-related activities to patrons of all ages as a result of the funds given to us for the Summer Reading Program.*

Fifteen individuals shared that continued education programs for library staff has been essential to ensure that staff are prepared and able to fully support library patrons. Eight respondents indicated that the Book Awards program has been impactful in engaging students. Comments that express the importance of this program include:

*The Continuing Education for the Vermont library Workforce Program is always important for library staff but was invaluable in 2020 during the pandemic, keeping librarians up to date with accurate information and resources through virtual webinars and meetups with Vermont Department of Libraries staff. Libraries were better able to provide services to their community in an ever changing situation with this state support.*

*Licensing of databases and continuing education - I was able to attend a full day of PD focused on global studies and early literacy in partnership with the public library where my school is located, and it changed the way I embed social studies into my curriculum.*

*Library staff members who were required to work from home through the COVID-19 pandemic and were trying to forge a way forward through a lot of uncertainty and change benefited immensely from continuing education and staff development opportunities.*

*The coordination of the state book award programs is also very helpful. I have students who look forward to the new list every year.*

## **Looking Forward**

Regarding changes in LSTA funding to improve library services, many respondents indicated that opportunities to invest in aiding the communities they serve would be the most beneficial, such as continued and expanded access to electronic resources and digital content such as streaming services (8 respondents), offsetting the cost of courier services (4 respondents), specialized staff training that

includes Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (3 respondents), and continued funding for existing programs such as the Summer Reading Program and ABLE (4 respondents). Some specific comments include:

*If Covid has shown us one thing, it's that we need to expand access to digital content.*

*Continued support for Clover, continued support or expansion of resources offered through Vermont Online Library, basic monetary support for all schools to participate in the Shared Schools Collection (Overdrive), and continued support of book awards programs (Golden Dome, Red Clover and GMBA).*

*I would love to see more choices in publicly available audio book resources. Many people enjoy an audio book, but no longer have CD players, and now rely on streaming. However, the wait times for streamed audio books is quite unwieldy*

### **COVID-19**

*The John G. McCullough Free Library secured an emergency COVID relief grant to pay for a year of this service, and it was enthusiastically embraced by our members. I had more people taking advantage of this resource in one year than have used Universal Class in a decade. Our patrons understood the value of this resource, especially because the pandemic has required those who are employed to develop new skills to adapt, and those who sought employment came to understand that potential employers were/ are looking for candidates with a new set of skills. When this resource was described to local business owners and Chamber of Commerce employees, the description was met with intense enthusiasm. The McCullough Library was unable to secure grant funding to renew this resource in May of 2021.*

*Because of the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic the library has found an increase in the use by patrons of GMLC Overdrive, ( downloadable e-books and audio books). Increased funding for this program for increased content and availability of e-books and audio books for the public would be terrific. Increased funding for the Summer Reading Program Grant enabling libraries to provide both more presentations and materials, including free books for children would make a positive difference.*

### **Additional Comments**

*I think we should rethink children's summer reading programs. I think their opportunities to improve how they are done- both how we incentivize the programs, how we account for their reading and ways to capitalize and connect with local resources.*

*I also value the courier grant money, because it does fray our cost. We have a larger collection than most, so are lending a lot of materials, but as mailing and other operating costs are built into our budget, we most likely would continue without the courier grant. However, I understand that not all libraries have that capacity. Again, the most impactful for our library is training for staff, volunteers, board members, etc. and the availability of the Vermont State Librarian Certification process.*

*Keep on with the support you are giving us now. I am still amazed at the high level of support and help that is always forthcoming. If I write to someone and they do not have the answer, they will*

*ALWAYS pass on my question until my problem gets solved. I find that this is sometimes rare in many fields.*

*I think that you are doing it. Keep listening. Keep responding to what you learn from the greater library community. The VT Department of Libraries' service and approach has been improved 300% from what it was a decade ago. I applaud and honor these strides. Your support during the pandemic has exemplified grace, skill and resilience under pressure. VTLIB continues to evolve and become the service it was meant to be. Well done, thank you, and please keep up the good work.*

*The post-grant reporting is very easy, please keep it as such. Federal money should be flagged a bit more for our town treasurers. When it comes from the state, it is seen as state money and they often forget to file the correct paperwork on their end. We have almost lost out on grants for being in non-compliance over that. The ABLE library has been without leadership for a while. Hopefully the new leader will do more to reach out to libraries and people across the state to offer their services. They have great offerings, just not many people know about them.*

*There are many small rural school libraries in the state that need services, but are underserved because staffing for schools is so limited. Staff do not have the capacity to access what is available that larger libraries are able to access. Anything we can do to boost access to youth services in rural communities is critical.*

*At ARSL last week, I was intrigued to learn that Iowa requires CEU for trustees in order for the library to be certified/endorsed at a particular level. The units seem quite flexible including reading an assigned book or series or articles. Could this be incorporated into VT standards when the standards return? The best of my trustees work and have children at home - they cannot attend a conference. The other trustees just won't make training a priority especially those who have sat on the board for a long, long time.*

*Reduce the paperwork, labor hours to report on funding is sometimes not worth the funding. For example, \$200 for a summer performer is sometimes not enough for a performance, let alone having to make sure you do not miss the email that you are required to respond to at the end of the summer.*

*I do think that the lack of direct funding support to libraries (which seems to be unique to VT) creates a very uneven system in our state, with the communities that can and will fully support a library receiving vastly better services than residents in towns who don't.*

*I really appreciated all of the classes that I was able to take to attain my Vermont Certificate of Librarianship. Before COVID it was a bonus to meet with many librarians and share what we had been doing. Virtual meetings are not the same. I especially love the various conferences that I was able to attend like the Red Clover Conference and the DCF Conference. Meeting authors and illustrators and receiving help with using books in the curriculum has been key to my work with the many homeschoolers that use the library and esp. the ILL services. Thank you for all you do for us. IN general, the support I have received from other librarians and all of the consultants has made me feel like I belong to a great and supportive team. I never feel alone.*

## Appendix J: Databases in Vermont

Prepared by Genya O’Gara, Library Consultant and VIVA Deputy Director

### Background

Statewide database programs are a crucial service supported at various levels by the vast majority of state library programs across the United States.<sup>11</sup> Meeting user needs in virtual as well as physical spaces is a critical component of state library services; even as physical visits and circulation decline at public libraries (a trend likely to be further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic), both the usage and availability of electronic resources has expanded.<sup>12</sup>

To understand the snapshot of the database resources and programs provided by the state agency, it is important to note that funding models for statewide databases have shifted considerably in the last few decades. For example, between 2000 and 2020 state libraries’ overall spending on statewide database licensing increased from 42.29 million to 74.04 million dollars (spent by 48 state libraries). Within this increase however, state libraries were very unlikely to be the sole source of support for statewide databases; in fact, in 2020 89.6 percent of statewide database licensing was carried out by multiple entities and funding sources.<sup>13</sup> In an informal 2021 survey of state data coordinators, it was found that although the majority of states offer support for a statewide databases program (41 of 44 respondents), many of those are not managed through the state library (only 33 reported state library management). Thirty-six of these respondents also noted the existence of a local e-resource consortium in the state.

Often these statewide database programs are supported in part through LSTA funding, as well as state funding, library cost-shares, grants, and external, but often complementary, consortial programs.<sup>14</sup> Each statewide database program is approached, funded, and supported in slightly different ways. The following snapshots note where LSTA funds have likely supported a particular resource or platform to some extent, but they do not note what other funding or percentage of support this comprises, as this information is beyond the scope of the LSTA evaluation.

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<sup>11</sup> The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. Functions and Roles of State Libraries: 2000 and 2020. Washington, DC: The Institute of Museum and Library Services, p.14.; Results from the SDC E-Resources Survey.

<sup>12</sup> The Institute of Museum and Library Services. (2021). *The Use and Cost of Public Library Materials: Trends Before the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Washington, DC: The Institute, p. 6.

<sup>13</sup> The Institute of Museum and Library Services. 2021. Functions and Roles of State Libraries: 2000 and 2020. Washington, DC: The Institute of Museum and Library Services, p.14.; Results from the SDC E-Resources Survey, p.14.

<sup>14</sup> Results from the 2021 SDC E-Resources Survey

**State: Vermont**

**Project details/URLs:**

- 2019: <https://imls-spr.imls.gov/Public/Details/83928>
- 2018: <https://imls-spr.imls.gov/Public/Details/82192>
- In FFY 2018 & FFY 2019, \$284,729.20 was spent on database resources, comprising 15.81% of total LSTA expenditures.

**1. Table of Resources:**

*\*Italicized resources are either newly added (since the period of evaluation), discontinued (during the period of evaluation), or not provided via LSTA funds.*

Vendor/Provider	Resource	Vendor/Provider	Resource
Gale/Cengage	Business Insights: Essentials	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Gardening and Horticulture
Gale/Cengage	<a href="http://ChiltonLibrary.com">ChiltonLibrary.com</a>	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Gender Studies
Gale/Cengage	Gale Academic OneFile	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Home Improvement
Gale/Cengage	Gale Academic OneFile Select	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Hospitality and Tourism
Gale/Cengage	Gale Books and Authors	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Information Science
Gale/Cengage	Gale Business: Entrepreneurship	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Insurance and Liability
Gale/Cengage	Gale General OneFile	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: LegalTrac
Gale/Cengage	Gale Health and Wellness	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Military and Intelligence
Gale/Cengage	Gale In Context: Biography	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: News
Gale/Cengage	Gale In Context: Elementary	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Nursing and Allied Health
Gale/Cengage	Gale In Context: High School	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine
Gale/Cengage	Gale In Context: Middle School	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Pop Culture Studies
Gale/Cengage	Gale In Context: Opposing Viewpoints	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Popular Magazines
Gale/Cengage	Gale In Context: Science	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Psychology
Gale/Cengage	Gale In Context: U.S. History	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Religion and Philosophy
Gale/Cengage	Gale Literary Index	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Science
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Agriculture	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: U.S. History

Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Business	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Vocations and Careers
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Communications and Mass Media	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: War and Terrorism
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Criminal Justice	Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: World History
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Culinary Arts	Gale/Cengage	Gale Power Search
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Diversity Studies	Gale/Cengage	Gale Presents: Peterson's Career Prep
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Economics and Theory	Gale/Cengage	Gale eBooks
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Educator's Reference Complete	Universal Class	Universal Class
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Entrepreneurship	EBSCO	<i>Learning Express (Just added)</i>
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Environmental Studies and Policy	ProQuest	<i>HeritageQuest (Discontinued)</i>
Gale/Cengage	Gale OneFile: Fine Arts	VDL, UV, VHS	<i>Vermont Digital Newspapers Project</i>

## 2. Access/Scope/Population:

The Vermont Online Library (VOL) offers a wide array of electronic information databases and scholarly article databases on many topics geared to a variety of age levels, for both generalists and specialists that are made available to all Vermont citizens. The statewide licensed subscription-based electronic resources are also included at all of Vermont's 185 public libraries. As of 2019, the VOL served a Vermont population of 623,989 (US Census). Resources cover academic topics, including psychology, history, religion & philosophy, and science, to more practical information, including gardening, career preparation, and auto repair. Additionally, over 500 classes are offered from office skills to algebra, baking to self-help, and spiritual studies to painting. For the time examined resource providers included Gale Cengage Learning databases (via Vermont academic, school and public member libraries) and Universal Class online learning (only via Vermont public libraries), and, until December 2019, HeritageQuest genealogy and local history databases. (ProQuest's HeritageQuest was discontinued when it was determined that access was not significantly more useful than similar and freely available resources.) Additionally, the VOL has recently added EBSCO's Learning Express to its available resources. Databases can be accessed by all Vermont citizens 24-hours-a-day at participating libraries, as well as anywhere Internet access is available. Authentication happens in a variety of ways, including through library IP authentication OR home and business IP addresses that are Vermont based. Users may also authenticate via geo-authentication by allowing the browser to share their user location. Alternately, users may choose their library from a dropdown menu

and enter their library barcode to login OR contact their local library for a password. Resources are well used -- in 2018 Gale databases had over 440,000 sessions, over 765,000 searches, and over 2300 classes started through Universal Class. In 2019 Gale database sessions decreased somewhat, but still maintained over 300,000 sessions, over 585,000 searches, and Vermonters started over 3,200 classes and logged in for over 59,000 sessions through Universal Class.

### **3. URLs:**

Links to all Gale product information, as well as personalized links for libraries are available here: <https://support.gale.com/vol/products> . For Universal Class offerings, patrons must register: <https://vermontstate.universalclass.com/> .

### **4. URLs usage:**

Usage stats are available from Gale here:

<https://c-usagereports.galeusageportal.com/cognos11/bj/> . Login information is provided by [joshua.muse@vermont.gov](mailto:joshua.muse@vermont.gov) . Public libraries use the Gale Usage Summary for resources to complete the annual Public Library Survey.. Information includes: total sessions, total connect time, average connect time, total full text, total retrievals, and total searches. The Public Library Survey information is available here, but does not break out usage information by specific resource: [https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/news/public\\_statistics](https://libraries.vermont.gov/services/news/public_statistics)