

State Library of North Carolina

Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA)

Five-Year Evaluation Report

2018–2022

Evaluators:
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Evaluation Commissioned by:
State Library of North Carolina

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. EVALUATION SUMMARY	1
II. EVALUATION REPORT.....	6
Appendix A - Acronyms Used	34
Appendix B - People Interviewed	35
Appendix C - Bibliography of Documents Reviewed.....	37
Appendix D. Research Instruments.....	38
Appendix E. Survey Demographics.....	67
Appendix F. Qualitative Codes	69

I. EVALUATION SUMMARY

Introduction

Background

The purpose of this report is to (a) provide an independent evaluation of progress made toward goals identified in the State Library of North Carolina (SLNC) 2018-2022 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Five-Year Plan; (b) provide the SLNC with valuable insights into the implementation and impact of their LSTA-funded investments; and (c) to lay the foundation for the needs assessment process that will inform the state's 2023-2027 LSTA plan. To this end, the SLNC engaged the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC) in September 2020 to serve as the external, independent evaluator for the North Carolina 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan.

Summary of North Carolina's 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan Goals

In 2017, the SLNC underwent a comprehensive needs assessment, informed by a diverse body of library stakeholders across the state. The identified needs were synthesized and parsed into three primary goals to guide North Carolina's 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan, which is depicted and operationalized in Figure 1 and the following list of goals:

Figure 1: LSTA 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan Goals



For each of these goals, the SLNC identified desired outcome to serve as indicators for needs identified in their 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan. For this evaluation, we are conceptualizing those as “sub-goals,” which is how they will be referred to throughout the report.

Goal 1: Strengthening Capacity - Desired Outcomes and Sub-Goals:

- Library staff have improved skills that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.
- Library users have improved information and digital literacy skills.
- Libraries use new and existing data to make data-driven decisions.
- Libraries offer or expand programs and services that are responsive to their communities.

- More libraries take the lead in conducting their own needs assessments, strategic planning, and implementation strategies for their strategic plan.
- Libraries improve alignment between the user’s physical and virtual experience.

Goal 2: Expanding Access - Desired Outcomes and Sub-Goals:

- North Carolinians have easy access to library materials and resources.
- Community members have improved information and digital literacy skills.
- North Carolinians have easy access to an increased number North Carolina’s digitized collections.
- Libraries have increased capacity to digitize and preserve their collections.
- Community members have increased access to creative library spaces in their communities.
- Library users have improved alignment between the physical and virtual library experience.
- The digital divide in North Carolina will be reduced.

Goal 3: Community Engagement - Desired Outcomes and Sub-Goals:

- Libraries are involved in an increased number of collaborative initiatives.
- Communities consider the library a valuable partner.
- Communities consider the library an expert on community services.
- Communities consider the library an essential community service.

A. Summary of Retrospective Questions

Progress Towards Goals

The mission of the SLNC is to enrich the lives of North Carolinians through access to information resources, to strengthen communities through exceptional library services, and to inspire and support literacy and lifelong learning for all North Carolinians. By definition, these goals will never be considered “fully achieved,” for they exemplify a commitment to ongoing growth and support. With this lens, the evaluation team established a systematic set of decision rules to reflect this mindset, while still attributing the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) designations for whether a goal is achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved.

A detailed discussion of the decision rules can be found within the main body of the report and is driven by the following criteria. For each of the three SLNC 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan goals, the evaluation team assessed the following:


Decision Criteria 1a: *Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support any of the sub-goals as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?*

 **NO – Goal Designated Not Achieved**

 **YES – Proceed to Decision Criteria 1b**

Decision Criteria 1b: *Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support at least half of the sub-goals as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?*

 **NO – Goal Designated Partly Achieved**

 **YES – Proceed to Decision Criteria 2**

Decision Criteria 2: Do LSTA grantees report that project activities are being implemented as proposed¹, and are the activities reaching their intended population(s)?

✗ **NO – Goal Designated Partly Achieved**

✓ **YES – Proceed to Decision Criteria 3**

Decision Criteria 3: Do multiple stakeholder groups perceive that LSTA investments have resulted in observable progress being made toward the LSTA Five-Year Plan goals?

✗ **NO – Goal Designated Partly Achieved**

✓ **YES – Goal Designated as Achieved**

Using this criteria and related decision rules the SLNC 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan goals were categorized as follow in Table 1:

Table 1: Progress toward LSTA Five-Year Plan Goals

Goal	Status
Goal 1: Strengthening Capacity	Achieved
Goal 2: Expanding Access	Achieved
Goal 3: Community Engagement	Partially Achieved

Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents

In collaboration with SLNC staff, all LSTA projects were mapped to measuring success intents and were condensed within the corresponding focal area. An examination of SLNC data revealed that 75% of LSTA dollars were mapped to the Information Access Focal Area and 65% of total dollars were mapped to the corresponding intent of *Improve users’ ability to obtain and/or use information resources*. This represents more than four-times the amount of funding that was mapped to the focal area with the second-highest investment dollars: *Institutional Capacity*. Focal areas that represented the least total investment dollars were *Economic & Employment Development*, *Human Services*, and *Civic Engagement*, which together sum to only 1% of the overall LSTA funding.

Beneficiary Groups

The beneficiary groups that were captured under *Library workforce (current and future)* and *Individuals with disabilities* met the IMLS definition of a “substantial focus,” being operationalized as a group that represents at least 10% of the LSTA resources. However, it is important to note that only 56% of total LSTA dollars were coded to one of the IMLS beneficiary groups; therefore, the remaining 44% of expenditures might push groups like *Children ages 0-5* and *School-aged youth (aged 6-17)* beyond the 10% threshold as shown in Table 2.

¹ This includes projects whose planners may have encountered barriers to implementation, but whose reports indicate an alternate approach is being pursued.

Table 2: Distribution of LSTA Funds Across Beneficiary Groups*

Beneficiary groups	LSTA dollar amount (including match funds)	Percent of total LSTA resources	Project Counts
Library workforce (current and future)	\$3,775,759.58	14.71	62
Individuals living below the poverty line	\$468,122.59	1.82	7
Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed	\$167,620.8	0.65	5
Ethnic or minority populations	\$363,460.27	1.42	10
Immigrants/refugees	\$7,030.81	0.03	1
Individuals with disabilities	\$4,747,735.17	18.49	8
Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills	\$739,447.65	2.88	18
Families	\$480,500.98	1.87	10
Children (aged 0-5)	\$1,939,677.03	7.56	20
School-aged youth (aged 6-17)	\$1,906,058.93	7.42	30
Total proportion of resources with beneficiary group specified		56.85	

*Note that dollars and counts are higher than total dollars and counts of SLNC activities because some activities were doubled-coded to represent more than one beneficiary group.

B. Summary of Process Questions

Use of State Program Report Data

SLNC leadership and project managers report included State Program Report (SPR) data used internally to guide decisions around investment strategies and to provide data-driven feedback to grantees. Externally, SLNC staff report sharing SPR data with a variety of stakeholders, ranging from advocacy with legislators to outreach with local libraries to encourage applications for LSTA funds. SLNC leaders identified a desire for a systematic way to share best practices between libraries across the state.

SLNC leaders reported sharing project examples and quantitative data around people and programs to use for advocacy with legislators to communicate the impact of federal funds and to encourage library staff to apply for grant funding. SPR data has also been shared among continuing education partners, which can provide valuable information about effectiveness and engagement across different activities and approaches.

Plan Changes and Adjustments

For almost two years now, the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically shifted the way that individuals, families, and communities live, work, and connect with each other. These shifts have often been accompanied by medical, economic, and social emotional strain. Locally, schools and libraries were forced to close, and many families ceased to participate in indoor activities within shared spaces. At the state level, COVID precipitated a shift in how LSTA funds were used and distributed, which was exemplified by an increase in “mini-grants” to support purchases such as personal protective equipment for library staff. Although these unprecedented events did not result in a formal change to the LSTA Five-Year Plan, varying degrees of adjustments were needed for all grantees as they began to navigate the “new normal.”

Also, within this timeframe, our Nation began to elevate discourse and activism around issues of racism and racial inequities, which was fueled by the murder of George Floyd through police brutality. In response to this, SLNC leaders and project managers reported supplementing LSTA-funded programs with activities that were specific to or supported goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Examples included purchasing books from underrepresented authors and constructing a series of events on African American and Native American/Indian American genealogy.

C. Summary of Methodology

Engaging External Independent Evaluator

In August 2021, the SLNC contracted with the EPIC to conduct an independent external evaluation of the North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan. The EPIC evaluation team worked closely with the SLNC to collate existing secondary data, to vet data collection instruments, and to serve as conduit to reach library stakeholders across the state. Beyond that, EPIC independently collected, analyzed, and summarized all the data used in this evaluation. To encourage frank and robust perspectives, survey data was collected anonymously online, and interview and focus group data was only connected to the type of stakeholder without any individual-level identifying information.

Evaluation Design and Data Collection

EPIC used a concurrent mixed-methods evaluation design, drawing on surveys to identify generalizable perceptions around the impact of LSTA investments, which was complemented by qualitative data to contextualize and give meaning to the quantitative results. Using a mixed-methods approach was also beneficial in triangulating the data to increase the validity and credibility of the research findings. The findings in this report are informed by the following data sources (see Appendix B for full list of participants):

- **Interviews** with SLNC Leadership and staff, including project managers
- **Focus groups** with LSTA advisory committee members
- **Surveys** with library directors, patrons, SLNC leadership and staff, and project managers
- **Document review** of LSTA grantee abstracts, SPR updates, state level surveys and reports
- **Administrative data** provided by SLNC around allocation of LSTA funds across grantees

D. Conclusions

The evaluators used multiple data sources and multiple types of data across multiple stakeholder groups, and the evaluation provides robust evidence that the SLNC is an effective, innovative, and caring steward of IMLS LSTA grant funds.

The findings from this report will be used to develop a formal needs assessment to prepare for the upcoming LSTA 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan. In the interim, the evaluation team proposes the following short-term recommendations:

Recommendation 1: Pilot systematic processes for sharing promising practices, lessons learned, and resources developed between libraries across the state. The review of SPR data provides some clear opportunities for economizing on shared learnings or it might allow planners to establish a train-the-trainer model to capitalize on individualized areas of expertise.

Recommendation 2: Consider allocating a portion of an SLNC staff member's time to serve as a coordinator for efforts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Several responses from interviews and surveys reflected that a lack of clear communication channels (both within and between teams) could be inhibiting the potential impact of activities that are presently perceived as operating within siloes.

Recommendation 3: Convene periodic "data day" discussions among groups of grantees, which would include topics such as best practices in formative data collection and measuring implementation fidelity. These convenings would also provide a structured opportunity for grantees to learn from each other as well as to provide peer support on issues that may be inappropriate or ineffective to discuss with SLNC project managers.

II. EVALUATION REPORT

A. Introduction

Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is three-fold. First, it serves to fulfill the IMLS legislation which directs State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs) to engage an independent evaluator in assessing progress toward the goals proposed within their state's LSTA Five-Year Plan. Second, in drawing from a utilization-focused evaluation approach² the independent evaluator can provide critical insights to the SLAA directly to gain a more robust understanding of the implementation and impact of their LSTA-funded investments. Finally, this evaluation serves as a springboard to inform a new statewide needs assessment to identify the goals that will guide the development of North Carolina's 2023-2027 LSTA Five-Year Plan.

Summary of North Carolina's 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan Goals

² Michael Quinn Patton, *Utilization-Focused Evaluation*, 4th ed; Sage Publications, 2008.

In June 2017, North Carolina submitted its fifth LSTA Five-Year Plan, spanning 2018-2022. The plan was informed by a needs assessment that was comprised of findings and recommendations from the North Carolina Digital Summit Initiative, LSTA Advisory Committee, library development consultants, State Library Commission, North Carolina’s Demographic Forecast, and the LSTA 2013-2017 Five-Year Evaluation Report. Needs assessment activities included site visits to all 84 library systems that served all 100 North Carolina counties, along with review of all quantitative and qualitative data that was provided through existing North Carolina LSTA grant reporting.

After synthesizing the needs that were identified across stakeholders, the SLNC identified three primary goals to guide North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan, which is depicted and operationalized as follows:

Goal 1: Strengthening Capacity - North Carolinians will have libraries with essential resources and capable staff that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.

Goal 2: Expanding Access - North Carolinians will have expanded access to resources for learning and success in school, work, and life.

Goal 3: Community Engagement - North Carolinians have will libraries that are more effective because they cooperate, coordinate, collaborate, and communicate to help the community address its needs.

Figure 1: LSTA 2018-2022 Five-Year Plan Goals



As exemplified through the pyramid organization (Figure 1), each goal builds on the previous goal, addresses one or more of the LSTA purposes and priorities, and is based on identified needs. This plan is intended to advance excellence and promote equity in North Carolina’s libraries.

For each of these goals, the SLNC identified the desired outcome to serve as indicators for needs that were identified in their 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan. For this evaluation, we are conceptualizing those desired outcomes as “sub-goals,” which is how they will be referred to throughout the report as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: LSTA Five-Year Plan Goals and Desired Outcomes

Five-Year Plan goals	Desired outcomes
<p>Goal 1: Strengthening Capacity</p> <p><i>North Carolinians will have libraries with essential resources and capable staff that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Library staff have improved skills that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services. ✓ Library users have improved information and digital literacy skills. ✓ Libraries use new and existing data to make data-driven decisions. ✓ Libraries offer or expand programs and services that are responsive to their communities. ✓ More libraries take the lead in conducting their own needs assessments, strategic planning, and implementation strategies for their strategic plan. ✓ Libraries improve alignment between the user’s physical and virtual experience.
<p>Goal 2: Expanding Access</p> <p><i>North Carolinians will have expanded access to resources for learning and success in school, work, and life.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ North Carolinians have easy access to library materials and resources. ✓ Community members have improved information and digital literacy skills. ✓ North Carolinians have easy access to an increased number North Carolina’s digitized collections. ✓ Libraries have increased capacity to digitize and preserve their collections. ✓ Community members have increased access to creative library spaces in their communities. ✓ Library users have improved alignment between the physical and virtual library experience. ✓ The digital divide in North Carolina will be reduced.
<p>Goal 3: Community Engagement</p> <p><i>North Carolinians have will libraries that are more effective because they cooperate, coordinate, collaborate, and communicate to help the community address its needs.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Libraries are involved in an increased number of collaborative initiatives. ✓ Communities consider the library a valuable partner. ✓ Communities consider the library an expert on community services. ✓ Communities consider the library an essential community service

B. Overview of 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan activities

To support progress toward the goals of strengthening capacity, expanding access, and community engagement, the SLNC funded a total of 203 projects totaling \$13,854,919.08 across this 3-year evaluation period. The major LSTA grant activities can be grouped within four categories that are briefly described in the following list and mapped to plan goals in Table 5.

Explanation of Major Activities

1. **Grants** - EZ grants, Project grants, NC Cardinal grants and mini-grants help support new or improved programs and services that solve specific problems or meet identified needs of North Carolina libraries.
2. **Special Projects** - Special projects are those that arise on an ad hoc basis, meet the requirements of the LSTA plan and priorities, and have a clear benefit for the libraries of a community of interest or for all the state’s libraries.
3. **Statewide Leadership** - Statewide leadership projects are those with broad, statewide impact and are developed by the State Library in response to emerging or broad-based needs that are consistent with the LSTA plan and priorities.
4. **Administration** - Pursuant to IMLS guidance, SLAA’s can access 4% of funds received by the state from IMLS for administrative costs. SLNC used this allotment to fund the LSTA coordinator’s salary, the grants assistant’s salary, and costs associated with the administration of the LSTA program.

Table 5: Alignment of Major Activities With Plan Goals

Major activities to support each goal	Main goals supported
EZ grants, Project grants, NC Cardinal grants and mini-grants	1,2,3
Special Projects	
NC State University (NC LIVE)	2
UNC Chapel Hill Digital Heritage Center	2
NC Kids	2
Statewide Leadership	
LD Connect	1
Adult Services	1
SLNC Professional Development	1
NC Public Library Standards	1
21 st Century Libraries	1
Meaningful Measurement	1
Forward Together	1

Major activities to support each goal	Main goals supported
Public Library Management	1
COVID-19 Response Mini-Grants	1
Scholarships	1
Evaluation and Assessment	1
NC Cardinal Resource Sharing	1
Continuing Education	2
Youth Services	2
Building Partnerships	2
#EverythingNC	2
#everyonesNorthCarolina (MOOC Planning)	2
NC Cardinal	2
Statewide Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped	2
Refreshable Braille	2

LSTA Funding Amounts and Distribution

The greatest proportion of LSTA funds support activities that are housed within “grants”, comprises 40% of total expenditures. The “statewide leadership” category received the second highest funding level, totaling 35% of LSTA grant funds. The remaining funds are allocated to maintain 4% of total funds dedicated to LSTA project administration and the 21% of project funds used for special projects as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Overview of LSTA Spending in North Carolina by Activity Type (not including match funds)

Activity	2018	2019	2020	Total	Percent
Grants	\$1,981,632.18	\$2,107,103.78	\$1,636,891.28	\$5,725,627.24	40%
Special projects	\$813,229.78	\$934,576.85	\$1,140,881.69	\$2,888,688.32	21%
Statewide leadership	\$1,601,319.80	\$1,447,461.77	\$1,818,801.11	\$4,867,582.68	35%
LSTA project admin	\$183,174.24	\$187,047.60	\$191,523.92	\$561,745.76	4%
Totals	\$4,579,356.00	\$4,676,190.00	\$4,788,098.00	\$14,043,644.00	100%

**Note percentages sum to greater than 100% due to rounding*

Matching Funds

SLNC leaders identified state matching funds as important part of the LSTA program, requiring a contribution of 34% of the total LSTA program funding per year from non-federal sources, including but not limited to state, local, corporate, or foundation sources. At SLNC’s request, we’ve included matching funds in all financial reporting from this point in the report forward to capture a more holistic view of the funds put forth in LSTA activities. The distribution of funds across goals demonstrates SLNCs commitment to expanding access, an issue which has become even more pressing as the pandemic continues to impede participation in opportunities that are being transitioned to virtual or remote access only as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: LSTA Funding and Projects by Goal

Goal	LSTA funding	Matching funds	Total funds	Project count	% funds by goal
Goal 1: Strengthening Capacity [17% of total funds across 87 projects]					
FFY 2018	\$1,638,805.73	\$325,491.37	\$1,964,297.10	32	46%
FFY 2019	\$923,495.43	\$95,510.55	\$1,019,005.98	23	24%
FFY 2020	\$1,122,717.94	\$229,895.98	\$1,352,613.92	32	31%
Total 2018-2021	\$3,685,019.10	\$650,897.90	\$4,335,917.00	87	100%
Goal 2: Expanding Access [79% of total funds across 96 projects]					
FFY 2018	\$2,662,231.79	\$3,443,046.43	\$6,105,278.22	33	31%
FFY 2019	\$ 3,488,551.54	\$3,711,546.84	\$7,200,098.38	34	36%
FFY 2020	\$ 3,360,306.86	\$3,224,585.62	\$6,584,892.48	30	33%
Total 2018-2021	\$9,511,090.19	\$10,379,178.89	\$19,890,269.07	97	100%
Goal 3: Community Engagement [5% of total funds across 8 projects]					
FFY 2018	\$ 95,144.24	\$3,396.73	\$98,540.97	3	32%
FFY 2019	\$ 77,095.43	\$2,207.53	\$79,302.96	2	26%
FFY 2020	\$113,549.28	\$12,689.37	\$126,238.65	3	42%
Total 2018-2021	\$285,788.95	\$18,293.63	\$304,082.58	8	100%
LSTA Project Administration [3% of total funds]					
Total 2018-2021	\$561,745.76	\$581,657.93	\$1,143,403.69		n/a
Total LSTA Spending	\$14,043,644.00	\$11,630,028.35	\$25,673,672.34	192	

A. Retrospective Questions

A-1: Progress towards goals

[IMLS Evaluation Question]: To what extent did your LSTA Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards each goal?

The mission of the SLNC is to enrich the lives of North Carolinians through access to information resources, to strengthen communities through exceptional library services, and to inspire and support literacy and lifelong learning for all North Carolinians. By definition, these goals will never be considered “fully achieved,” for they exemplify a commitment to ongoing growth and support. With this lens, evaluation team established a systematic set of decision rules to reflect this mindset, while attributing the IMLS designations of achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved. The three guiding questions for this decision criteria are presented along with the decision rules that were used to determine the designation regarding whether a goal was achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved.


Decision Criteria 1a: *Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support any of the sub-goals as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?*

 **NO – Goal Designated Not Achieved**

 **YES – Proceed to Decision Criteria 1b**


Decision Criteria 1b: *Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support at least half of the sub-goals as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?*

 **NO – Goal Designated Partly Achieved**

 **YES – Proceed to Decision Criteria 2**

Decision Criteria 2: *Do LSTA grantees report that project activities are being implemented as proposed³, and are the activities reaching their intended population(s)?*

 **NO – Goal Designated Partly Achieved**

 **YES – Proceed to Decision Criteria 3**

Decision Criteria 3: *Do multiple stakeholder groups perceive that LSTA investments have resulted in observable progress being made toward the LSTA Five-Year Plan goals?*

 **NO – Goal Designated Partly Achieved**

 **YES – Goal Designated as Achieved**

Goal 1: Strengthening Capacity

Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity: Designated as ACHEIVED

SLNC identified “Strengthening Capacity” as **Goal 1** of its 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan, intending that “North Carolinians will have libraries with essential resources and capable staff that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.”

Decision Criteria 1a: *Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support any of the sub-goals for **Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity** as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?*

 **YES – Proceed to Decision Criteria 1b**

³ This includes projects whose planners may have encountered barriers to implementation, but whose reports indicate an alternate approach is being pursued.

Table 8: Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity Expenditures

Fiscal year	LSTA	Matching	Total
FFY 2018	\$1,638,805.73	\$325,491.37	\$1,964,297.10
FFY 2019	\$ 923,495.43	\$ 95,510.55	\$1,019,005.98
FFY 2020	\$1,122,717.94	\$229,895.98	\$1,352,613.92
Total	\$3,685,019.10	\$650,897.90	\$4,335,917.00

Decision Criteria 1b: Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support at least half of the sub-goals for **Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity** as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?

✓ **YES** – Proceed to Decision Criteria 2

Table 9: Goal 1. Strengthening Capacity Subgoals

Sub-goal	Project count*	% of total LSTA Strengthening Capacity Projects from FFY 2018-2020
Sub-Goal 1: Libraries use new and existing data to make data driven decisions	40	47
Sub-Goal 2: More libraries take the lead in conducting their own needs assessments, and implementation strategies for their strategic plan.	32	37
Sub-Goal 3: Library staff have improved skills that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.	24	28
Sub-Goal 4: Library users have improved information and digital literacy skills.	10	12
Sub-Goal 5: Libraries offer or expand programs and services that are responsive to their communities.	33	38
Sub-Goal 6: Libraries improve alignment between the user’s physical and virtual experience.	4	5

*Some grants met the criteria for multiple outcomes; therefore, they were double coded, reflecting a higher total count.

Decision Criteria 2: Do LSTA grantees report that project activities that correspond to **Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity** are being implemented as proposed, and are the activities reaching their intended population?

✓ **YES** – Proceed to Decision Criteria 3

Sub-Goal 3 in SLNC’s LSTA Five-Year Plan was intended to allow library staff to have “improved skills that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.” Ultimately, our qualitative analysis found that this sub-goal would be intricately tied to the remaining sub-goals in this section.

SLNC leadership, staff, and Advisory Committee members described an array of activities to demonstrate the operationalization of **Sub-Goal 3**. The participants across roles described funded workshops and scholarships across a variety of topics, including early literacy and support for young adults that expanded opportunities for training and conference attendance for library staff. [When in-person training activities were challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic, participants described the ways in which SLNC mobilized to find online opportunities for professional development and to develop the infrastructure to lead its own programming and workshops virtually. Staff discussed the use of LSTA funds to purchase “People Connect Institute” weekly webinars, after which there was an observed increase in engagement in online professional development among library stakeholders.](#)

“Using LSTA funds to purchase the PCI [People Connect Institute] subscription has been amazing because it’s linked to our LMS . . . they offer these live webinars each week and then they have access to them in our LMS, so it’s not all on me now to be the only person providing professional development for librarians so that has been one thing that has really expanded its capacity and access, one and the same.” - Project Manager

Other examples of program implementation around the **Goal 1**, Strengthening Capacity include:

- [Niche Academy, a self-paced learning management software program, was partly funded through LSTA and, in the wake of COVID-19, training, increased SLNC’s ability to offer trainings asynchronously. Similar to the impact of PCI, SLNC program managers observed an increase in engagement with the use of Niche Academy.](#)
- Staff described funding of 21st Century Libraries, an initiative that provided access to the LibGuides platform (a library knowledge-sharing system that allows library staff to easily create online content for users in a hosted environment) for SLNC, 58 community college libraries, and 84 public library systems across the state, as another facilitator of achieving the sub-goal of improving library staff skills and enabling them to provide exceptional library programs and services.

The participants described the impact of the availability of these technological tools in helping library staff to build their digital literacy skills, particularly related to data, and apply them to future decision making around programming and providing better service to patrons. This outcome aligns to **Sub-Goal 1**, intending for libraries to use new and existing data to make data driven decisions.

In addition to expanding opportunities for learning online, LSTA funding enabled the mobilization of the “Southeast Collaborative Conference,” which convenes libraries from North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia as a means of connecting library staff across the regions. Under the Statewide Leadership Continuing Education and Adult Services projects, staff worked to stay in touch with the needs of libraries and tailored programming to address those needs. Many participants mentioned diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings and resources as being impactful pieces of LSTA’s funding for strengthening library capacity. Under SLNC, the Racial-Equity Toolkit, a multi-part, self-paced course was developed to provide training on implicit bias, structural racism, and the ways in which racism operates in library services.

“With the death of George Floyd, we tried to then focus really heavily on DEI efforts and make sure that library staff, even those that were maybe not necessarily ready to address DEI issues, we made sure that they understood that they must address them and that libraries are not neutral places where you just don’t have to think about things like that, so we tried to get things out to them to let them know what it was that they needed to be focusing on at that time. So, I feel really good about what we’ve put out for them, and I feel good about our program up to now.” - Project Manager

The desired outcome of **Sub-Goal 4** (*library staff having improved skills*) and the variety of ways in which SLNC addressed this goal tie directly with **Sub-Goal 5** that aimed to *expand library offerings of programs and services that are responsive to their communities*. The widening of opportunity for library staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of programming enabled them to serve better their communities with programs such as “Supercharged Story Times,” which offered early literacy training and provided foundational and early brain development training that library staff could leverage when designing programming. Similarly, SLNC invested in Flow Circus, a program developed to help children and teenagers build resilience through the ups and downs of learning. Staff also described workshops that helped library staff better understand how autism may present in their patrons, equipping them with tools to provide better service to these valued patrons.

The intent of **Sub-Goal 4** (*library users have improved information and digital literacy skills*) was in fact widely discussed across all three of the overarching goals of the plan. One participant shared the development of ANCHOR (A NC Historical Online Resource) which provides a history of North Carolina from pre-colonial era onward,

“We’ve been trying to add more recent history to that, especially filling in gaps with Civil Rights and just places that weren’t done previously . . . It’s not what’s in textbooks. We have used temporary hires to fill in, to write those articles, we have partnered with Start Publications to write additional articles, so we’ve used LSTA money to do a lot of that to bring in more voices.” - Project Manager

Many of the other projects associated with the improvement of library staff skills also support the achievement of **Sub-Goal 4**. The increase in digital literacy of library staff extends to patrons, and the greater availability of information and programming.

For **Goal 1**, Strengthening Capacity, SLNC intended that *more libraries would take a lead in conducting their own needs assessments, strategic planning, and implementation strategies for their strategic plan*. The participants described revisions underway of public library standards that would allow libraries to self-assess their progress in meeting defined levels of service, creating measurable, consistent, and community focused guidelines. These standards are also meant to allow for library communication with stakeholders and funders regarding the types of resources needed to achieve desired levels of service. At the time of this reporting, the new standards were still under review and were anticipated to go before the State Library Commission for final approval.

Outside of this effort, some participants who were affiliated with the Adult Services project area described working with a consultant who conducted an environmental scan of the programming capacity of the public libraries in the state. This activity functioned as a partial needs assessment as the consultant asked public libraries about their unmet needs and allowed for SLNC project managers to contour their adult services programming in those directions.

Sub-Goal 6 was associated with the Strengthening Capacity goal intended for *libraries to improve their alignment between users’ physical and virtual experiences*. Overwhelmingly, interview and focus group participants described the rush to mobilize and improve virtual experiences for library patrons because of the COVID-19 pandemic and broad-stroke library closures that diminished patrons’ ability to access physical library spaces. One participant described a partnership between SLNC and broadband providers to offer public libraries access to hotspots for use by library patrons. Other previously mentioned projects such as ANCHOR, 21st Century Libraries, and funding for library staff to increase their digital literacy also helped to support the achievement of this sub-goal.

Decision Criteria 3: *Do multiple stakeholder groups perceive that LSTA investments in **Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity** have resulted in observable progress being made toward the Five-Year Plan goal?*

✓ YES →

Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity: Designated as ACHEIVED

Survey Analysis

The findings from the online library stakeholders and patron survey reflect analogous perceptions, namely that LSTA funds have supported the **Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity** needs identified in SLNC’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan as shown in Tables 10 and 11.

Table 10: Stakeholder Survey, Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity (n = 57)

Question	LSTA funds have not supported need being met at all	LSTA funds have supported need being met partially	LSTA funds have supported need being met fully	Not applicable
Library staff have improved skills that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.	7.02%	29.82%	28.07%	35.09%
Library users have improved information and digital literacy skills.	5.26%	43.86%	24.56%	26.32%
Libraries use new and existing data to make data-driven decisions.	7.14%	33.93%	28.57%	30.36%
Libraries offer or expand programs and services that are responsive to their communities.	1.82%	38.18%	49.09%	10.91%
More libraries take the lead in conducting their own needs assessments, strategic planning, and implementation strategies for their	7.27%	30.91%	27.27%	34.55%

Question	LSTA funds have not supported need being met at all	LSTA funds have supported need being met partially	LSTA funds have supported need being met fully	Not applicable
strategic plan.				
Libraries improve alignment between the user's physical and virtual experience.	3.64%	38.18%	30.91%	27.27%

Table 11: Patron Survey, Goal 1, Strengthening Capacity (n = 76)

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
Provides an appealing library environment	1.32%	1.32%	6.58%	88.16%	2.63%
Maintains current technology/devices/hardware for users	3.95%	3.95%	26.32%	56.58%	9.21%
Provides exceptional library programs and services	0.00%	3.95%	19.74%	71.05%	5.26%
Has improved my information and digital literacy skills	1.32%	10.53%	36.84%	32.89%	18.42%
Has programs and services that are responsive to my community	1.32%	2.63%	23.68%	63.16%	9.21%
Supports alignment between my physical and virtual experience	1.32%	5.26%	25.00%	46.05%	22.37%

Goal 2: Expanding Access

Goal 2, Expanding Access: Designated as ACHEIVED

SLNC identified "Expanding Access" as **Goal 2** of its LSTA Five-Year Plan, intending that "North Carolinians will have expanded access to resources for learning and success in school, work, and life."

Decision Criteria 1a: Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support any of the sub-goals for **Goal 2, Expanding Access**, as described in North Carolina's 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?

✓ **YES** – Proceed to Decision Criteria 1b

Table 12: Goal 2, Expanding Access Expenditures

Fiscal year	LSTA	Matching	Total
FFY 2018	\$2,662,231.79	\$3,443,046.43	\$6,105,278.22
FFY 2019	\$ 3,488,551.54	\$3,711,546.84	\$7,200,098.38
FFY 2020	\$ 3,360,306.86	\$3,224,585.62	\$6,584,619.18
Total	\$9,511,090.19	\$10,379,178.89	\$19,889,995.78

Decision Criteria 1b: *Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support at least half of the sub-goals for **Goal 2, Expanding Access** as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?*

✓ **YES** – Proceed to Decision Criteria 2

Table 13: Goal 2, Expanding Access Sub-Goals

Sub-goal	Project count*	% of total LSTA Expanding Access Projects from FFY 2018-2020
Sub-Goal 1: North Carolinians have easy access to library materials and resources.	54	56
Sub-Goal 2: Community members have improved information and digital literacy skills.	32	33
Sub-Goal 3: North Carolinians have easy access to an increased number of North Carolina’s digitized collections.	15	15
Sub-Goal 4: Libraries have increased capacity to digitize and preserve their collections.	7	7
Sub-Goal 5: Community members have increased access to creative library spaces in their communities.	11	11
Sub-Goal 6: The digital divide in North Carolina will be reduced.	18	19

**Some grants met the criteria for multiple outcomes; therefore, they were double coded, reflecting a higher total count.*

Decision Criteria 2: *Do LSTA grantee reports indicate that project activities corresponding to **Goal 2, Expanding Access** are being implemented as proposed, and are reaching their intended population?*

✓ **YES** – Proceed to Decision Criteria 3

The **Sub-Goal 1** under Expanding Access reflects a desire for all North Carolinians to have easy access to library materials and resources. Interview and focus groups shared abundantly about programs that were aimed at increasing patron access to library resources, including grant funding for programs such as the Refreshable Braille Display Project that included the purchase of 32 braille displays to pilot with

blind or physically handicapped patrons, providing them with the ability to access library materials for free. As a result, a member of SLNC Leadership reported that 60% of patrons enjoyed using the new e-readers, and BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download Service) by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS) reported an uptick in Braille downloading. In addition to this resource for blind or physically handicapped patrons, SLNC Leadership described the mobilization of Duplication on Demand, which allows for users to access multiple books on one cartridge, reducing the burden on patrons to return to the library to procure new titles.

“We’re able to lend them out to the public and get their feedback as to how the program was working and basically, their reactions to the equipment that we lent them and we were able then to take that and to feed it back to the National Libraries Service, which helps them not only in planning the administration of it but also in developing the equipment for when they actually roll out an active refreshable Braille program.” – Project Manager

SLNC project managers shared other activities aimed at increasing access to library materials, including a statewide project, NC Kids, that purchased access to e-books and audiobooks to supplement the kindergarten-4th grade fiction titles. This activity increased the collection of titles for this cohort by 24,000.

Other participants discussed bookmobiles that were funded throughout the state using LSTA provisions. These mobile libraries further increased North Carolinians’ access to library materials, and in some cases helped to achieve other Expanding Capacity sub-goals of improving digital literacy skills and reducing the digital divide as many of these “mobile innovations” were outfitted with iPads, Wi-Fi, and other digital resources. Mobile libraries also achieved the sub-goals of providing community members with increased access to creative library spaces in their communities.

“One of the barriers to access, a lot of times, is transportation and location, so if you’re not located near a public library, something like a remote locker or a bookmobile is really going to be a game changer for people.” - SLNC Leadership

Other projects aimed at providing community members with increased access to creative library spaces included STEM Makerspaces. LSTA funding was used to fund makerspace program coordinators, as well as other resources that enhanced opportunities for students to engage in hands-on STEM activities. Similarly, LSTA funding was used to support StarLab’s portable planetariums. Outfitted with built-in software, this resource was easily transportable across the state to public libraries, increasing its reach. Of the StarLabs, one Project Manager explained:

“They were able to have museum quality science, outer space opportunities to use with their public, if their public couldn’t get to science museums and it also coincided with the summer program year that was all about Space because the 50th anniversary of the Moon landing.” – SLNC Project Manager

Many interview participants identified a partnership with the Digital Heritage Center at UNC Chapel Hill, that aims to expand patrons’ access to digitized historic materials about North Carolina’s cultural heritage. Participants described the benefits of this project including the capability of patrons to access these resources more easily:

“Our Government and Heritage Library is really focused on obtaining more digital content, so you don’t have to drive down to Raleigh to do research and I’ve seen, over the last year,

really those collections really have expanded with some really relevant content that people are interested in old newspapers and family history type things.” – SLNC Leadership

The partnership with the Digital Heritage Center was LSTA-funded as a Special Project over all three years of this report’s evaluation period. SLNC’s partnership with the Digital Heritage Center also support SLNC’s sub-goals of ensuring North Carolinians have easy access to an increased number of North Carolina’s digitized collections, and that libraries have an increased capacity to digitize and preserve their collections.

Similar to the COVID-19 pandemic’s impact on the Strengthening Capacity sub-goal to improve alignment between the physical and virtual library experiences for library users, the pandemic created necessity in the Expanding Access goal area to invest in resources that would allow patrons to access their library’s materials virtually. As mentioned above, the NC Kids project allowed for expansion of digital titles for children. One project manager discussed a particularly well-received project, Building Partnerships for Student Success, where SLNC pivoted to full-day virtual workshops for educators in response to the pandemic:

“So, all of the workshops that we’ve done the assessment data has just been off the charts. They’ve been thrilled with the workshops. They’ve gotten so much out of them. Some people have even been able to incorporate what we’ve trained them on into the classroom in a very stressful COVID year, which we were surprised about.” - SLNC Project Manager

Decision Criteria 3: *Do multiple stakeholder groups perceive that LSTA investments for **Goal 2, Expanding Access** have resulted in observable progress being made toward the Five-Year Plan goals?*

✓ YES →

Goal 2, Expanding Access: Designated as Achieved

Table 14: Stakeholder Survey, Expanding Access (n = 44)

Question	LSTA funds have not supported need being met at all	LSTA funds have supported need being met partially	LSTA funds have supported need being met fully
North Carolinians have easy access to library materials and resources	0.00%	47.73%	52.27%
Community members have improved information and digital literacy skills	5.56%	58.33%	36.11%
North Carolinians have easy access to an increased number of North Carolina’s digitized collections	5.13%	43.59%	51.28%

Question	LSTA funds have not supported need being met at all	LSTA funds have supported need being met partially	LSTA funds have supported need being met fully
Libraries have increased capacity to digitize and preserve their collections	14.29%	48.57%	37.14%
Community members have increased access to creative library spaces in the communities.	9.09%	36.36%	54.55%
Library users have improved alignment between the physical and virtual library experience.	5.00%	55.00%	40.00%
The digital divide in North Carolina has been reduced.	11.11%	58.33%	30.56%

Table 15: Patron Survey, Expanding Access (n = 75)

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strong Agree	Don't Know
Community members can have easy access to library materials and resources.	0.00%	1.33%	10.67%	84.00%	4.00%
Community members can access library materials and resources online.	0.00%	2.67%	16.00%	76.00%	5.33%
Cultural heritage, historic, and special collection materials are made readily available.	0.00%	5.33%	21.33%	56.00%	17.33%
Community members have access to technology and high-speed internet.	0.00%	2.67%	26.67%	64.00%	6.67%
Community members have opportunities to improve information and digital literacy skills.	1.33%	4.00%	21.33%	53.33%	20.00%
Community members have access to creative library spaces like learning commons and maker spaces.	1.33%	4.00%	29.33%	42.67%	22.67%

Goal 3: Community Engagement

Goal 3, Community Engagement - Designated as PARTIALLY ACHEIVED

SLNC identified “Community Engagement” as **Goal 3** of its five-year plan, intending that “North Carolinians will have libraries that are more effective because they cooperate, coordinate, collaborate, and communicate to help the community address its needs.”

Decision Criteria 1a: *Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support any of the sub-goals for **Goal 3, Community Engagement**, as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?*

✓ **YES** – Proceed to Decision Criteria 1b

Table 16: Goal 3, Community Engagement Funding

Fiscal year	LSTA	Matching	Total
FFY 2018	\$ 95,144.24	\$3,396.73	\$98,540.97
FFY 2019	\$ 77,095.43	\$2,207.53	\$79,302.96
FFY 2020	\$113,549.28	\$12,689.37	\$126,238.65
Total	\$285,788.95	\$18,293.63	\$304,082.58

Decision Criteria 1b: *Is LSTA funding allocated to projects that directly support at least half of the sub-goals for **Goal 3, Community Engagement** as described in North Carolina’s 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?*

✓ **YES** – Proceed to Decision Criteria 2

Table 17: Goal 3, Community Engagement Sub-Goals

Sub-goal	Project count*	% of total Community Engagement LSTA projects from FFY 2018-2020
Sub-Goal 1: Libraries are involved in an increased number of collaborative initiatives.	7	87
Sub-Goal 2: Communities consider the library a valuable partner.	4	50
Sub-Goal 3: Communities consider the library an essential community service.	1	13
Sub-Goal 4: Communities consider the library an expert on community services.	1	13

**Note that dollars and counts are higher than total dollars and counts of SLNC activities because some activities were doubled-coded to represent more than one beneficiary group.*

Decision Criteria 2: *Do LSTA grantee reports indicate that project activities corresponding to **Goal 3, Community Engagement** are being implemented as proposed, and are reaching their intended population?*

 **NO** →

Goal 3, Community Engagement: Designated as Partly Achieved

Although LSTA funding is mapped to each of the four sub-goal areas, activities related to the sub-goals “communities consider their local libraries as valuable partners,” “communities consider the libraries to be essential experts on community services,” and “communities consider libraries an expert on community service” were not documented in our transcripts.

However, the first sub-goal (libraries are involved in an increased number of collaborative initiatives) was referenced across multiple stakeholder groups. Members of the SLNC LSTA Advisory Committee also spoke about how many of the grants aligned with the Strengthening Capacity and Expanding Access goals also helped to create substantial partnerships, which aligns with the first sub-goal within Expanding Community Engagement. The participants named work with the Digital Heritage Center and the over 290 partners that work with SLNC to preserve the state’s history. Project managers echoed this perception by naming North Carolina Cardinal as another project that helped to create partnerships among libraries across the state. The Advisory Committee members also discussed partnerships between school libraries, citing the Student Access Initiative and the memorandums of understanding formed between libraries to share student data and offer them easier access to a more comprehensive body of library materials.

The Advisory Committee members also shared that they were paying closer attention to community grant applications. Project managers echoed this effort of inclusivity by describing a push to support libraries in involving community members in their strategic planning processes, and in providing feedback regarding programming and goals. Lastly, project managers described mini-grant opportunities through the “Community Connections” project that is aimed at supporting community-oriented events or programs with libraries across the state.

Criteria 3: *Do multiple stakeholder groups perceive that LSTA investments for **Goal 3, Community Engagement** have resulted in observable progress being made toward the LSTA Five-Year Plan goals?*

 **YES** →

While Criteria 2 determined the rating of *Partly Achieved*, an assessment of Criteria 3 was also conducted and answered in the affirmative, as illustrated in the tables below.

Table 18: Stakeholder Survey, Community Engagement (n = 38)

Question	LSTA funds have not supported need being met at all	LSTA funds have supported need being met partially	LSTA funds have supported need being met fully
Libraries are involved in an increased number of collaborative initiatives.	7.89%	50.00%	42.11%
Communities consider the library a valuable partner.	10.81%	51.35%	37.84%
Communities consider the library an expert on community services.	8.57%	68.57%	22.86%
Communities consider the library an essential community service.	11.11%	47.22%	41.67%

Table 19: Patron Survey, Community Engagement (n = 74)

Question	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strong Agree	Don't Know
I feel welcome in my library.	0.00%	2.70%	4.05%	89.19%	4.05%
Communities consider the library a valuable partner.	0.00%	4.05%	20.27%	60.81%	14.86%
Communities consider the library an essential community service.	0.00%	4.05%	21.62%	62.16%	12.16%
My library has helped to improve equitable access to technology and internet (e.g., the digital divide).	1.35%	2.70%	21.62%	58.11%	16.22%

A-2: Measures of Success Focal Areas

[IMLS evaluation question] To what extent did your LSTA Five-Year Plan activities achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?

The IMLS launched the *Measuring Success Initiative* in 2011 to help IMLS and State Library Administrative Agencies (SLAAs) plan for, manage and evaluate LSTA- supported library activities. To facilitate this, all SLAA Five-Year Plans must include a crosswalk mapping their goals and proposed project activities to one of six Measuring Success focal areas and corresponding intent(s).

In collaboration with SLNC staff, all LSTA projects were mapped to Measuring Success intents and condensed within the corresponding focal area. There was substantial variation in investments across the six focal areas, with 74% of funding going to the *Information Access* focal areas, and 88% of investments in

that focal area mapping to corresponding intent of *improving users' ability to obtain and/or use information services*. At the other end of the spectrum, investments mapped to the focal areas of *Economic & Employment Development, Human Services, and Civic Engagement* only sum to 1% of the overall LSTA funding.

The following table maps the number of projects and funding amounts to LSTA activities that fall within the six focal areas and one or more corresponding intents. Looking across focal areas, the SLNC invests over three-quarters of its LSTA funds in *Informational Access* and *Institutional Capacity*

Table 20: LSTA projects mapped to Measuring Success Focal Areas and Intents

Focal area	Count of projects by focal area	Sum of LSTA dollars and match funds by focal area	Corresponding intents	Count of projects by intent	Sum of LSTA dollars and match funds by intent
Lifelong Learning	36	\$1,499,602.44	Improve users' formal education	11	\$501,936.29
			Improve users' general knowledge and skills	25	\$997,666.15
Information Access	68	\$18,152,956.22	Improve users' ability to discover information resources	20	\$2,380,439.50
			Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources	48	\$15,772,516.72
Institutional Capacity	76	\$4,556,771.84	Improve the library workforce	17	\$799,984.09
			Improve the library's physical and technological infrastructure	15	\$1,109,677.48
			Improve library operations	44	\$2,668,390.27
Economic & Employment Development	2	\$46,056.86	Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support	2	\$46,056.86
			Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources	0	--
Human Services	4	\$59,466.87	Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or	3	\$54,884.27

Focal area	Count of projects by focal area	Sum of LSTA dollars and match funds by focal area	Corresponding intents	Count of projects by intent	Sum of LSTA dollars and match funds by intent
			family health & wellness		
			Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills	1	\$4,582.60
Civic Engagement	6	\$215,141.58	Improve users' ability to participate in their community	6	\$215,141.58

A-3: Substantial Groups

[IMLS Evaluation question] Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for your LSTA Five-Year Plan activities? A substantial focus would represent at least ten percent of the total amount of resources committed by the overall plan across multiple years.

To evaluate the extent to which any of the specified groups represented a substantial focus for SLNC's LSTA Five-Year Plan, we developed a matrix in which all grant abstracts from the three-year evaluation period were read and coded in alignment with specific groups served. The evaluators operationalized the extent to which these populations were served by calculating the amount of LSTA funds, in conjunction with match funds, that were dedicated to the projects serving groups of interest.

Table 21: Proportion of Resources Coded to Beneficiary Groups*

Beneficiary groups	LSTA dollar amount (including match funds)	Percent of total LSTA resources	Project Counts
Library workforce (current and future)	\$3,775,759.58	14.71	62
Individuals living below the poverty line	\$468,122.59	1.82	7
Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed	\$167,620.8	0.65	5
Ethnic or minority populations	\$363,460.27	1.42	10
Immigrants/refugees	\$7,030.81	0.03	1
Individuals with disabilities	\$4,747,735.17	18.49	8
Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills	\$739,447.65	2.88	18
Families	\$480,500.98	1.87	10
Children (aged 0-5)	\$1,939,677.03	7.56	20

Beneficiary groups	LSTA dollar amount (including match funds)	Percent of total LSTA resources	Project Counts
School-aged youth (aged 6-17)	\$1,906,058.93	7.42	30
Total proportion of resources with beneficiary group specified		56.85	

**Note that dollars and counts are higher than total dollars and counts of SLNC activities because some activities were doubled-coded to represent more than one beneficiary group.*

Discussion of Beneficiary Groups Meeting Substantial Focus Threshold

The two groups meeting the definition of “substantial groups” - representing at least ten percent of the total amount of resources committed by the overall plan across multiple years - were the Library Workforce (totaling 62 project and supported through 14.7% of total LSTA allotment) and Individuals with Disabilities (totaling 8 projects and supported through 18.5% of total LSTA allotment).

It is important to note that only about 57% of all SLNC investments had activities attributed to a corresponding beneficiary group. Thus, although it is unlikely the overall pattern would change dramatically, it is feasible that mapping the remaining 44% of funds could propel *Children (aged 0-5)* and *School-aged youth (aged 6-17)* across the 10% threshold.

Library Workforce (current and future) – 62 Projects / 14.7% of Total LSTA Funding

The most common use of funds within the *Library Workforce* group was for support in organizational or community strategic planning. There was wide variability in the foci of planning efforts, ranging from an assessment of training needs around the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) conversation, to garnering community input on the perceived safety and utility of library facilities. An increasingly pressing need within the library workforce is training and experience around digitization. One exemplar supporting this need was undertaken by the largest library system in North Carolina – also one of the largest in the Nation - through the use of LSTA funds to develop a successful training process for circulation teams on RFID conversation. The increased workforce capacity resulted in converting collections at the main library and five branch libraries for over 350,000 items, while concurrently maintaining the fidelity of a floating collection.

Another *Library Workforce* project with wide-reaching impact was conducted by a state public university, to explore the creation of a statewide archival processing service. Results from a statewide survey identified a need and desire for training assistance, with a focus on archival arrangement, descriptions, digitization. The university piloted several training videos with different approaches for disseminating information, given the technical nature of the training. The feedback around the videos, along with partnership among other state organization, was used to support a proposal for federal grant funding to develop and deliver archive management training to institutions across the state.

Individuals With Disabilities - 8 Projects / 18.5% of Total LSTA Funding

The largest portion of funds within the *Individuals with disabilities* group is allocated to supporting the Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped (LBPH), a special public library that circulates books and magazines that are especially made for persons who cannot use regular printed material because of a visual or physically disability. LBPH offers the same book and magazine titles found in other public libraries in audio, large print, and Braille formats; the library also provides specialized audio playback equipment to

patrons using cartridges or digital books for patron use free of charge. Upon registration for services, patrons select reading formats that best suit their needs and indicate preferences for specific titles or reading genres. and assessable for individuals within a variety of special needs.

B. Process Questions

B-1. Use of SPR Data to Guide Activities in the LSTA Five-Year Plan

[IMLS Evaluation Question] How have you used any data from the State Program Report (SPR) and elsewhere (e.g., Public Libraries Survey) to guide activities included in the LSTA Five-Year Plan?

The extent and purpose of SPR data use varied across interviewees. At the leadership level, the primary use of SPR data was to review project methods and descriptions to craft grant programs and guide program activities. Project managers reported using SPR data to reference questions from potential sub-awardee libraries, particularly in providing guidance around national guidelines to inform allowability and grant activities. One specific example of how SPR data was used to inform practice was in relation to workshop programming, where data could be aggregated around attendance to identify topics that are of interest and events that are well-received.

The interviewees referenced a variety of other sources used to inform their work, including consulting with organizations such as the National Federation of the Blind, and drawing on public databases such as the National Center for Education Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data Statistics to leverage data around specific audiences and needs to guide library activities. Several internal survey sources were referenced as resources, including the annual member-library staff and member-library site surveys, annual Public Library Survey reporting, financial forecasting, statistics about 21st-century libraries, and surveys of North Carolina state employees.

B-2: Modifications to the LSTA Five-Year Plan

[IMLS Evaluation Question] Specify any modifications you made to the LSTA Five-Year Plan. What was the reason for this change?

The year 2020 brought unprecedented challenges that impacted every aspect of society. In spring 2020, the global COVID-19 pandemic began to trigger mandated limits to gathering in public spaces, closing of small businesses, spikes in unemployment, and a mass transition from in-person schools to remote learning. In May 2020, the murder of George Floyd brought heightened attention and discourse around issues of racism and racial inequities across the nation.

Although there were no formal modifications to the LSTA Five-Year Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the distribution of more mini-grants, specifically 125 in FFY 2019 and 82 in FFY 2020 to both public and academic libraries to finance library necessities such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), as well programming to support library operations and outreach in the pandemic environment. Separately, SLNC Leadership and project managers reported supplementing some projects, including activities specific for or supporting goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Examples included purchasing books from underrepresented authors, Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) trainings, and constructing a series of events on African American and Native American/Indian American genealogy.

B-3: SPR Data Use

[IMLS Evaluation Question] How and with whom have you shared data from the SPR and from other evaluation resources? How have you used the last LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation to inform data collected for the new LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation? How have you used this information throughout this five-year cycle?

SLNC leaders and project managers report that SPR data and other evaluation resources have been shared internally with library staff, and externally with fellow state-level consultants, legislators, and library directors at the local and regional levels.

SLNC leaders reported sharing project examples and quantitative data around program usage in advocacy efforts with legislators, while program managers reported using SPR data to encourage library directors to apply for grant funding. SLNC project managers also highlighted the utility of sharing SPR data around continuing education with libraries across the state to better understand to gain insight into how activities are perceived, and where the most pressing needs lie.

Although SLNC leadership and staff did not report using the last five-year evaluation to inform data collected for the new five-year evaluation, the evaluation team reviewed the evaluation report data sources and findings to help inform instrument development for interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

SLNC leaders and project managers reported not using the 2013-2017 LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation throughout this five-year cycle, identifying reasons such as not yet being an SLNC employee or not being involved the previous evaluation was conducted.

C. Methodology Questions

C-1: Implementation of an Independent LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation

[IMLS Evaluation Question] Identify how you implemented an independent LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation using the criteria described in the IMLS guidance document.

In August 2021, the SLNC contracted with EPIC to conduct an independent external evaluation of the North Carolina's 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan. EPIC is an interdisciplinary and multi-method group of researchers housed in the Department of Public Policy at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For over a decade, EPIC has provided qualitative and quantitative evaluation services at the state and local levels, with expertise in implementation fidelity assessments, intensive primary data collection efforts including focus groups, interviews, surveys, and analysis of large-scale administrative data sets, to provide evidence and inform decision making around program implementation, outcomes, and impact.

EPIC's longstanding partnerships with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, and the University of North Carolina System have provided opportunities to cultivate and sustain research-to-practice partnerships with policymakers and education practitioners across North Carolina. EPIC has an established history of conducting rigorous and relevant research, engaging researchers and practitioners in addressing problems of practice, and a commitment toward the use of data-driven evidence in decision making.

EPIC evaluation team worked closely with the SLNC to collate existing secondary data, vet data collection instruments, and serve as conduit to reach library stakeholders across the state. Beyond that, EPIC

independently collected, analyzed, and summarized all data used in this evaluation. To encourage frank and robust perspectives, survey data was collected anonymously online, and interview and focus group data was only connected to the type of stakeholder without any individual-level identifying information.

C-2: Statistical and Qualitative Methods

[IMLS Evaluation Question] Describe the types of statistical and qualitative methods (including administrative records) used in conducting the LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation. Assess their validity and reliability?

EPIC evaluation team used a concurrent mixed-methods evaluation design, drawing on surveys to identify generalizable perceptions around the impact of LSTA investments, complemented by qualitative data to contextualize and give meaning to the quantitative results. Using a mixed-methods approach was also beneficial in triangulating the data to increase the validity and credibility of the research findings.

Interviews and Focus Groups

In September 2021, PIC conducted a total of 15 virtual interviews via Zoom. This sample consisted of SLNC leaders and staff, including project managers. Additionally, in October 2021, EPIC facilitated two virtual focus groups of three advisory committee members. See Appendix B for the full list of participants. These data collection efforts were supplemented with follow-up surveys administered through Qualtrics. A copy of the interview questions, focus group guide, and post-interview survey items can be found Appendices D1, D2, and D5.

Surveys

In October 2021, EPIC conducted an online survey of LSTA Stakeholders, which was administered to library directors or their designees in leadership roles for their LSTA grants. We received a total of 121 responses (20.75% response rate). A copy of the stakeholder survey can be found in Appendix D3.

In addition to the stakeholder survey, in November 2021, EPIC deployed an online survey to a sample of LSTA grantee patrons (see Appendix D4). This survey was administered with the assistance of SLNC leadership and was made available throughout libraries across North Carolina. We received 85 responses from this survey. Although we don't know the precise denominator, that sample size would not be sufficient to establish statistical significance. This is often a challenge with population level surveys, particularly without any direct touchpoints to respondents. In these cases, we assess the variability and patterns of quantitative responses and the extent that responses from the qualitative open-ended question have achieved a measure of "saturation" where there is convergence across key themes. Although this provided confidence in the face validity of our findings, the interpretation of all survey results must factor in response bias. Namely, it is more likely that our surveys were completed by patrons on the tails of a spectrum, either feeling strongly negative or strongly positive in relation to those who opted not to complete the survey. Descriptive statistics for library type and location can be found in Appendix E. Note that we intentionally opted to exclude individual sociodemographic characteristics in an effort to minimize inhibiting factors for survey response.

Once qualitative interviews with SLNC leadership and staff were finalized in November 2021, EPIC deployed an online survey to the participants interviewed. This survey was sent to triangulate our findings from the qualitative interviews conducted. The survey asked the participants about focal subgroups of LSTA activities, alignment with IMLS national priorities; LSTA activities with an explicit focus on equity. The survey was completed by 15 participants.

Data Review

State program reports (SPRs) dating from 2018-2021 were collected from the IMLS's State Library Dashboard. In addition to SPR data, evaluators used North Carolina's LSTA 2013-2017 LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation, North Carolina's 2018-2021 LSTA Five-Year Plan, census bureau data, individual grantee documents, and internal program evaluation data to contextualize our findings. See Appendix C for a full list of data sources used to inform this report.

Analysis

To analyze the SPR data, evaluators collated the grants' primary fields (e.g., award amount, the goal the project was mapped to, the project intent, outputs, outcome importance, and lessons learned). These data were extracted and organized in an excel spreadsheet categorized by year awarded. The evaluators analyzed the data and mapped the projects according to their specified goals, needs addressed, and outcomes attained.

After qualitative interviews and focus groups were conducted, interviews were transcribed. Three members of the evaluation team analyzed the transcriptions by coding them in a spreadsheet by theme (e.g., goals met, challenges to achieving goals, perceived library needs, and strategies to address challenges of achieving goals). Three members of the evaluation team analyzed the transcripts using a deductive coding scheme, organizing the data by theme (e.g., goals met, challenges to achieving goals, perceived library needs, and strategies to address challenges of achieving goals; see Appendix F for qualitative coding scheme). Qualitative codes were used to map the interview data to North Carolina's three strategic goals and the IMLS Measuring Success Crosswalk (see Appendix F for qualitative coding scheme). After this first series of qualitative coding, a second matrix was created to map data findings to SLNC's delineated needs, goals, and outcomes.

Three members of the evaluation team analyzed the transcripts, using a deductive coding scheme, organizing the data by theme (e.g., goals met, challenges to achieving goals, perceived library needs, and strategies to address challenges of achieving goals; see Appendix F for qualitative coding scheme). Qualitative codes were used to map the interview data to North Carolina's three strategic goals and the IMLS Measuring Success Crosswalk (see Appendix F for qualitative coding scheme). After this first series of qualitative coding, a second matrix was created to map data findings to SLNC's delineated needs, goals, and outcomes.

To analyze survey data, evaluators created an output of descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, sums, and means.

C-3: Description and Engagement of Stakeholders in the LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation

[IMLS Evaluation Question] Describe the stakeholders involved in the various stages of the LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation. How did you engage them?

The EPIC evaluation team worked closely with the SLNC Federal Programs consultant as the primary point of contact for stakeholder engagement. For interviews and focus groups with SLNC Leadership and project managers, EPIC was introduced via a group email from the Federal Program consultant, which was followed by individual emails from the EPIC scheduler to coordinate interviews and focus groups. For the LSTA

Stakeholder survey the Federal Programs consultant sent an email to library directors, which included a description of the evaluation and a link to EPIC’s online Qualtrics survey. For the Library Patrons survey the Federal Program consultant re-engaged this group with a request to include a link to the patron survey on their library’s website and any planned e-correspondence.

Without the constraints of a pandemic, the evaluation team would normally conduct site visits to encourage buy-in and place flyers, and to identify opportunities for “captive audiences” where we could request that the survey be completed within a group activity or meeting. In addition to losing those opportunities, the SLNC and evaluation team were acutely sensitive to minimizing the burden while libraries and community members would be navigating unprecedented challenges and stressors. Although there is no doubt that this decreased the total number of survey respondents, there were enough areas of consensus and saturation of key themes to support the validity of our findings.

C-4. Sharing of Key Findings and Recommendations

[IMLS Evaluation Question] Discuss how you will share the key findings and recommendations with others.

The EPIC evaluation team will work with SLNC to ensure that this evaluation report is accessible for public viewing on the SLNC and IMLS websites. All the data collected for the purpose of the evaluation will be shared with SLNC and will supplement reports and presentations. The SLNC will place the submitted evaluation on the SLNC webpage, located on the “[About LSTA,](#)” and the SLNC home page will display a temporary carousel card directing website visitors to view the evaluation. SLNC will share the evaluation with listservs, including but not limited to NCLA, NCPLDA, and LSTA Advisory Committee. Additionally, all project managers and library directors from the evaluation period will be provided an update and copy of the evaluation.

D. Conclusion

This evaluation provides robust evidence that the SLNC is an effective, innovative, and caring steward of IMLS LSTA grant funds. Furthermore, SLNC staff served as true partners in continuous improvement, through reviewing data collection instruments, facilitating survey distribution, and being exceptionally responsive and invested in supporting a rich understanding of their work and mission.

Findings from this report will be used to develop a formal needs assessment to prepare for the creation of the state’s upcoming LSTA 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan. In the interim, the evaluation team proposes consideration of four actionable recommendations that could benefit from buy-in and planning in the near term. These recommendations were informed by stakeholder feedback on surveys and interviews, along with first-hand observations throughout this evaluation period.

Recommendation 1: Pilot systematic processes for sharing promising practices, lessons learned, and resources developed between libraries across the state. Review of SPR data provides some clear opportunities for economizing on shared learnings, or might allow trainers to establish train-the-trainer models to capitalize on individualized areas of expertise.

Recommendation 2: Consider allocating a portion of an SLNC staff member’s time to serve as a coordinator for efforts related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Several responses from interviews and surveys reflected that a lack of clear communication channels (both within and between organizations)

could be inhibiting the potential impact of activities that are presently perceived as operating within siloes.

Recommendation 3: Convene periodic “data day” discussions among groups of grantees, which would include topics such as best practices in formative data collection and measuring implementation fidelity. These convenings would also provide a structured opportunity for grantees to learn from each other as well as to provide peer support on issues that may be inappropriate or ineffective to discuss with SLNC project managers.

Appendix A - Acronyms Used

ANCHOR - A North Carolina History Online Resource

ARSL - Association of Rural and Small Libraries

CE - Continuing Education

DEI - Diversity, equity, and inclusion

GHL - Government and Heritage Library, a unit of the State Library of North Carolina

ILL - Interlibrary loan

ILS - Integrated Library System

IMLS - Institute for Museum and Library Services

LBPH - Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

LSTA - Library Services and Technology Act

NC - North Carolina

NC Cardinal - North Carolina's shared Integrated Library System, which runs on Evergreen software

NCA&T - North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University

NCICU - North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities

NCLA - North Carolina Library Association

NCpedia - North Carolina online encyclopedia

NCPLDA – North Carolina Public Library Directors Association

NCSU - North Carolina State University

SLAA - State Library Administrative Agency

SLNC - State Library of North Carolina

SPR - State Program Report

UNC - University of North Carolina

Appendix B - People Interviewed

SLAA Leadership Staff

Name	Title
Timothy Owens	State Librarian
Susan Forbes	Assistant State Librarian
Cotina Jones	Director of Library Development
Kelly Eubank	Director of Government and Heritage Library
Carl Keehn	Director of Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped

SLAA Project Managers

Name	Title
Jasmine Rockwell	Youth Services Consultant
Catherine Prince	Federal Programs Consultant
Lynda Reynolds	Public Library Management Consultant
Jeffrey Hamilton	Adult Services Consultant
Jackie Haske	Grants Assistant
Craig Hayward	Systems and Digital Services Librarian
Amanda Johnson	Data Analysis and Communications Consultant
Benjamin Murphy	NC Cardinal Program Manager
Lauren Clossey	Continuing Education Consultant
Jen Hanft	Head of Content Information and Delivery

Advisory Committee Members

Name	Organization	Title
Lisa Gregory	North Carolina Digital Heritage Center	Program Coordinator
Staci Wilson	Catawba Valley Community College	Director of Library Services
Lucy Holman	University of North Carolina at Wilmington	Director

Name	Organization	Title
Kathy Parker	North Carolina Department of Public Instruction	School Library Media Consultant
Melanie Morgan	Neuse Regional Library	Director of Libraries
Earl Givens	Catawba College	Dean of Learning Resources and Library Director

Appendix C - Bibliography of Documents Reviewed

Adult Services Programming Environmental Scan: <https://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/media/59/download?attachment>

Continuing Education Survey Results

DRAFT Statistical Report of North Carolina Public Libraries, July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021

NC Cardinal Staff Survey Results: <https://statelibrary.ncdcr.gov/media/529/download?attachment>

North Carolina LSTA Evaluation Online Post-Interview Survey Summary Data and Report

North Carolina LSTA Evaluation Online Stakeholder Survey Summary Data and Report

North Carolina LSTA Online Patron Survey Summary Data and Report

North Carolina SPR FFY 2018

North Carolina SPR FFY 2019

North Carolina SPR FFY 2020

Notes from Advisory Committee focus groups October 12-13, 2021

Notes from State Library of North Carolina Interviews, September 27–October 7, 2021

US Census QuickFacts: North Carolina, accessed online at: <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/NC>

Appendix D. Research Instruments

Appendix D1 - SLNC and Program Manager Interview Protocol

Before we begin, on behalf of the EPIC team, we'd like to thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. The purpose of this interview is to hear your perceptions around the overall progress toward the North Carolina 2018-22 Five-Year Goals, including potential factors that may have facilitated or inhibited progress. We will also be asking about your perceptions around needs that should be addressed in the 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan.

I would like to ask your permission to record our conversation today so that I may accurately document the information that you share with me. The recording will only be accessible to members of the research team. If at any time you wish to stop the recording or the interview itself, please let me know. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may stop your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions before we begin?

For the record, please state your name and the position you hold within the State Library of North Carolina:

Name: _____

Position: _____

I. Goal Attainment

For this part of the interview, we'd like to go through each goal individually to get a sense of your perceptions around progress.⁴ We'll also invite you to use this time to tell us more about factors that have aided or hampered movement towards meeting these goals.

A. The Strengthening Capacity Goal intends that “North Carolinians will have libraries with essential resources and capable staff that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.”

1. Would you say that this goal has been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved at all?
2. Can you provide us with examples illustrating progress toward this goal?
3. What factors have helped to facilitate progress toward this goal?
4. What type of challenges or barriers have hindered progress toward this goal?
5. What, if any, strategies do you feel could help to address these challenges going forward?

⁴ SLNC leaders were asked about all goals; SLNC project managers were asked about the goal that corresponded to their projects.

B. The Expanding Access Goal intends that “North Carolinians will have expanded access to resources for learning and success in school, work, and life.”

6. Would you say that the goal has been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved at all?
7. Can you provide us with examples illustrating progress toward this goal?
8. What (factors?) have helped to facilitate progress toward this goal?
9. What type of challenges or barriers have hindered progress toward this goal?
10. What, if any, strategies do you feel could help to address these challenges going forward?

C. The Community Engagement Goal intends that “North Carolinians will have libraries that are more effective because they cooperate, coordinate, collaborate, and communicate to help the community address its needs . . .”

11. Would you say that the goal has been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved at all?
12. Can you provide us with examples illustrating progress toward this goal?
13. What (factors?) have helped to facilitate progress toward this goal?
14. What type of challenges or barriers have hindered progress toward this goal?
15. What, if any, strategies do you feel could help to address these challenges going forward?

II. Process Questions

Now, we’re going to pivot the conversation to process questions related to your activities related to the 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan.

16. How have you used any data from the State Program Report (SPR) to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan?
17. Have you used data from any other sources (e.g., Public Libraries Survey) to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan? If so, in what way(s)?
18. Have you made any modifications to the Five-Year Plan? If so, for what reasons?
19. We’d like to hear about any data you have shared from the SPR and other evaluation resources . . . what types of data have you shared, and for what purpose?
20. In what ways have you used the 2013-2017 Five-Year Evaluation to inform data collected for the current Five-Year Evaluation?
21. How have you used this information throughout this Five-Year cycle?

III. Needs Assessment

Next, we want to spend some time looking ahead to North Carolina's 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan.

22. What do you perceive to be the greatest needs around library services in North Carolina?
23. To what extent do you feel these needs that you've just described reflect a substantial shift in focus for the next five-year plan, versus being an extension of the needs already being addressed in your 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan?
24. Of the needs you just identified, which do you feel confident about being able to address, and which are more likely to face challenges and barriers?
25. What types of strategies or supports may help to mitigate the impact of these potential challenges and barriers?

IV. Context

Thinking broadly about the context in which LSTA grantees have operated over the past two years . . .

26. In what ways do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted grantee implementation and outcomes, particularly as it relates to meeting the goals of the LSTA Five-Year Plan?
27. Are there any other factors we should be aware of at the federal, state, or local levels - for example policy changes - that may have had an influence on LSTA grantees implementation or outcomes?

V. Next Steps

Lastly, we would appreciate your input on next steps for our evaluation.

28. Are there any other reports or data sources that would be useful to inform the LSTA evaluation?
29. Did you participate in last year's 5-year Evaluation or needs assessment?
>>If yes, (ask about eval and NA separately),
 - What aspects did you find the most useful?
 - What processes worked well and which didn't?
 - Was there any data or information that was not included that would have been useful?
30. Is there anything else you can think of that would be useful for us to know?

Appendix D2 - LSTA Advisory Committee Focus Group Guide

Before we begin, on behalf of the EPIC team, we'd like to thank you for taking the time to talk with us today. The purpose of this focus group is to hear your perceptions around the overall progress toward the North Carolina 2018-2022 LSTA Five-Year Goals, including potential factors that may have facilitated or inhibited progress. We will also be asking about your perceptions around needs that should be addressed in the 2023-2027 LSTA Five-Year Plan.

I would like to ask your permission to record our conversation today so that I may accurately document the information that you share with me. The recording will only be accessible to members of the research team. If at any time you wish to stop the recording or the interview itself, please let me know. Your participation in this interview is voluntary. If at any time you need to stop or take a break, please let me know. You may stop your participation at any time without consequence. Do you have any questions before we begin?

- Please state your name, organization, position, and how long you have participated on the LSTA Advisory Committee:
- Broadly, how would you describe the role of the LSTA Advisory Committee as it relates to North Carolina's LSTA Five-Year plan?
- What are the essential activities of the LSTA Advisory Committee? For example, (a) What decisions are you responsible for making; (b) How do you interface with other LSTA stakeholders?

I. Goal Attainment

We are going to focus our time today on your perceptions of progress toward North Carolina's three overarching goals - Strengthening Capacity, Expanding Access, and Community Engagement.

First, the **Strengthening Capacity Goal intends that** "North Carolinians will have libraries with essential resources and capable staff that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services."

1. Would you say this goal has been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved at all?
 - a. Why or why not?
2. What factors do you feel have either facilitated or inhibited progress toward this goal?
3. What types of additional supports could have been useful in helping to address challenges and barriers?

Second, the **Expanding Access Goal intends that** "North Carolinians will have expanded access to resources for learning and success in school, work, and life."

4. Would you say this goal has been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved at all?
 - a. Why or why not?
5. What factors do you feel have facilitated or inhibited progress toward this goal?

6. What types of additional supports could have been useful in helping to address challenges and barriers?

Third, the **Community Engagement Goal intends that** “North Carolinians will have libraries that are more effective because they cooperate, coordinate, collaborate, and communicate to help the community address its needs.”

7. Would you say this goal has been achieved, partly achieved, or not achieved at all?
 - a. Why or why not?
8. What factors do you feel have facilitated or inhibited progress toward this goal?
9. What types of additional supports could have been useful in helping to address challenges and barriers?

II. Context

Thinking broadly about the context in which LSTA grantees have operated over the past three years.

10. In what ways do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the implementation and outcomes of LSTA initiatives?
11. Are there any other factors we should be aware of at the federal, state, or local levels - for example policy changes - that may have had an influence on LSTA grantees implementation or outcomes?

III. Needs Assessment

Next, we want to spend some time looking ahead to North Carolina’s 2023-2027 Five-Year Plan.

12. What do you perceive to be the greatest needs around library services in North Carolina?
13. What barriers currently exist toward meeting these needs?
14. What types of initiatives do you feel could help meet these needs in the 2023-2027 plan?

IV. Next Steps

Lastly, we would appreciate your input on next steps for our evaluation.

15. Are there any other reports or data sources that you can think of that would be useful to inform the LSTA evaluation?
16. Is there anything else you can think of that would be useful for us to know?

Appendix D3 - LSTA Stakeholder Survey

You are being asked to complete this survey because your organization received LSTA funding between 2018 and 2021. The purpose of this survey is to assess perceptions around the extent that needs and goals identified in the SLNC LSTA plan have been met. Your participation is voluntary.

All survey responses will go directly to the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina, and only aggregate level data will be included in reports. Findings will be used to inform the State Library's priorities and processes for the next round of LSTA funds, so as much detail as you are able to provide in your written answers is appreciated. For questions you may contact Julie Marks at jtmarks@email.unc.edu. Thank you again!

****Please feel free to forward your email to anyone in your organization who would be appropriate to contribute to the LSTA evaluation****

1. What type of library do you work for?
 - Public
 - Community College
 - North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICUs)
 - UNC System

2. For which **public library** system do you work?

Library name	Library name
<input type="radio"/> Alamance County Public Libraries	<input type="radio"/> Albemarle Regional Library
<input type="radio"/> Alexander County Library	<input type="radio"/> Appalachian Regional Library
<input type="radio"/> Avery-Mitchell-Yancey Regional Library	<input type="radio"/> Beaufort-Hyde-Martin Regional Library
<input type="radio"/> Bladen County Public Library	<input type="radio"/> Braswell Memorial Library
<input type="radio"/> Brunswick County Library	<input type="radio"/> Buncombe County Public Libraries
<input type="radio"/> Burke County Public Library	<input type="radio"/> Cabarrus County Public Library
<input type="radio"/> Caldwell County Public Library	<input type="radio"/> Carteret County Public Library
<input type="radio"/> Catawba County Library	<input type="radio"/> Chapel Hill Public Library
<input type="radio"/> Charlotte Mecklenburg Library	<input type="radio"/> Chatham County Public Libraries
<input type="radio"/> Cleveland County Library System	<input type="radio"/> Columbus County Public Library
<input type="radio"/> Craven-Pamlico Regional Library	<input type="radio"/> Cumberland County Public Library & Info. Ctr.
<input type="radio"/> Davidson County Public Library System	<input type="radio"/> Davie County Public Library
<input type="radio"/> Duplin County Library	<input type="radio"/> Durham County Library
<input type="radio"/> East Albemarle Regional Library	<input type="radio"/> Edgecombe County Memorial Library

Library name	Library name
○ Farmville Public Library	○ Fontana Regional Library
○ Forsyth County Public Library	○ Franklin County Library
○ Gaston County Public Library	○ George H. & Laura E. Brown Public Library
○ Gibsonville Public Library	○ Given Memorial Library
○ Granville County Library System	○ Greensboro Public Library
○ Halifax County Library System	○ Harnett County Public Library
○ Harold D. Cooley Library	○ Haywood County Public Library
○ Henderson County Public Library	○ Hickory Public Library
○ High Point Public Library	○ Hocutt Ellington Memorial Library
○ Iredell County Library	○ Lee County Library
○ Lincoln County Public Library	○ Madison County Public Library
○ Mauney Memorial Library	○ McDowell County Public Library
○ Mooresville Public Library	○ Nantahala Regional Library
○ Neuse Regional Library	○ New Hanover County Public Library
○ Northwestern Regional Library	○ Onslow County Public Library
○ Orange County Public Library	○ Pender County Public Library
○ Perry Memorial Library	○ Person County Public Library
○ Pettigrew Regional Library	○ Polk County Public Libraries
○ Public Library of Johnston County & Smithfield	○ Randolph Public Library
○ Roanoke Rapids Public Library	○ Robeson County Public Library
○ Rockingham County Public Library	○ Rowan Public Library
○ Rutherford County Library	○ Sampson-Clinton Public Library
○ Sandhill Regional Library System	○ Scotland County Memorial Library
○ Sheppard Memorial Library	○ Southern Pines Public Library
○ Transylvania County Library	○ Union County Public Library
○ Wake County Public Libraries	○ Warren County Memorial Library
○ Wayne County Public Library	○ Wilson County Public Library

3. Which **community college library** do you work for?

College name	College Name
<input type="radio"/> Alamance Community College	<input type="radio"/> Asheville-Buncombe Tech Community College
<input type="radio"/> Beaufort County Community College	<input type="radio"/> Bladen Community College
<input type="radio"/> Blue Ridge Community College	<input type="radio"/> Brunswick Community College
<input type="radio"/> Caldwell Community College & Technical Institute	<input type="radio"/> Cape Fear Community College
<input type="radio"/> Carteret Community College	<input type="radio"/> Catawba Valley Community College
<input type="radio"/> Central Carolina Community College	<input type="radio"/> Central Piedmont Community College
<input type="radio"/> Cleveland Community College	<input type="radio"/> Coastal Carolina Community College
<input type="radio"/> College of the Albemarle	<input type="radio"/> Craven Community College
<input type="radio"/> Davidson-Davie Community College	<input type="radio"/> Durham Technical Community College
<input type="radio"/> Edgecombe Community College	<input type="radio"/> Fayetteville Technical Community College
<input type="radio"/> Forsyth Technical Community College	<input type="radio"/> Gaston College
<input type="radio"/> Guilford Technical Community College	<input type="radio"/> Halifax Community College
<input type="radio"/> Haywood Community College	<input type="radio"/> Isothermal Community College (26)
<input type="radio"/> James Sprunt Community College	<input type="radio"/> Johnston Community College
<input type="radio"/> Lenoir Community College	<input type="radio"/> Martin Community College
<input type="radio"/> Mayland Community College	<input type="radio"/> McDowell Technical Community College
<input type="radio"/> Mitchell Community College	<input type="radio"/> Montgomery Community College
<input type="radio"/> Nash Community College	<input type="radio"/> Pamlico Community College
<input type="radio"/> Piedmont Community College	<input type="radio"/> Pitt Community College
<input type="radio"/> Randolph Community College	<input type="radio"/> Richmond Community College
<input type="radio"/> Roanoke-Chowan Community College	<input type="radio"/> Robeson Community College
<input type="radio"/> Rockingham Community College	<input type="radio"/> Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
<input type="radio"/> Sampson Community College	<input type="radio"/> Sandhills Community College
<input type="radio"/> South Piedmont Community College	<input type="radio"/> Southeastern Community College
<input type="radio"/> Southwestern Community College	<input type="radio"/> Stanly Community College
<input type="radio"/> Surry Community College	<input type="radio"/> Tri-County Community College

College name	College Name
<input type="radio"/> Vance-Granville Community College	<input type="radio"/> Wake Technical Community College
<input type="radio"/> Wayne Community College	<input type="radio"/> Western Piedmont Community College
<input type="radio"/> Wilkes Community College	<input type="radio"/> Wilson Community College

4. Which **NCICU library** do you work for?

Library name	Library Name
<input type="radio"/> Barton College	<input type="radio"/> Belmont Abbey College
<input type="radio"/> Bennett College	<input type="radio"/> Brevard College
<input type="radio"/> Campbell University	<input type="radio"/> Campbell University School of Law
<input type="radio"/> Catawba College	<input type="radio"/> Chowan University
<input type="radio"/> Davidson College	<input type="radio"/> Duke University
<input type="radio"/> Duke University Divinity School	<input type="radio"/> Duke University Medical Center
<input type="radio"/> Duke University School of Business	<input type="radio"/> Duke University School of Law
<input type="radio"/> Elon University	<input type="radio"/> Gardener-Webb University
<input type="radio"/> Greensboro College	<input type="radio"/> Guilford College
<input type="radio"/> High Point University	<input type="radio"/> Johnson C. Smith University
<input type="radio"/> Lees McRae College	<input type="radio"/> Lenoir-Rhyne University
<input type="radio"/> Livingstone College	<input type="radio"/> Louisburg College
<input type="radio"/> Mars Hill University	<input type="radio"/> Meredith College
<input type="radio"/> Methodist University	<input type="radio"/> Montreat College
<input type="radio"/> North Carolina Wesleyan College	<input type="radio"/> Pfeiffer University
<input type="radio"/> Queens University of Charlotte	<input type="radio"/> Saint Andrews University
<input type="radio"/> Saint Augustine's University	<input type="radio"/> Salem College
<input type="radio"/> Shaw University	<input type="radio"/> University of Mount Olive
<input type="radio"/> Wake Forest University	<input type="radio"/> Wake Forest University School of Law
<input type="radio"/> Wake Forest University School of Medicine	<input type="radio"/> Warren Wilson College
<input type="radio"/> William Peace University	<input type="radio"/> Wingate University

5. Which **UNC System library** do you work for?

Library system	Library system
<input type="radio"/> Appalachian State University	<input type="radio"/> East Carolina University
<input type="radio"/> East Carolina University Division of Health Sciences	<input type="radio"/> Elizabeth City State University
<input type="radio"/> Fayetteville State University	<input type="radio"/> North Carolina A&T State University
<input type="radio"/> North Carolina Central University	<input type="radio"/> North Carolina Central University School of Law
<input type="radio"/> North Carolina School of Science & Mathematics	<input type="radio"/> North Carolina State University
<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina - Asheville	<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill Health Sciences	<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill School of Law
<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina - Charlotte	<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina - Greensboro
<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina - Pembroke	<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina - Wilmington
<input type="radio"/> University of North Carolina School of the Arts	<input type="radio"/> Western Carolina University
<input type="radio"/> Winston-Salem State University	

6. What is your current position?

In the following sections, we will ask about the extent your LSTA funding has enabled you to meet needs and achieve outcomes related to the three overarching goals in North Carolina’s LSTA plan:

(a) Strengthening Capacity; (b) Expanding Access; and (c) Community Engagement.

*The **Strengthening Capacity Goal** states that North Carolinians will have libraries with essential resources and capable staff that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.*

7. Broadly, to what extent do you feel LSTA funding has supported progress toward the Strengthening Capacity goal for your library?

- LSTA funds have not supported any progress towards this goal for your library.
- LSTA funds have supported this goal being achieved partially.
- LSTA funds have supported this goal being achieved fully.

8. *To what extent do you feel LSTA funds have supported your library in meeting the following needs as it relates to Strengthening Capacity?*

Need	LSTA funds have not	LSTA funds have	LSTA funds have	Not
------	---------------------	-----------------	-----------------	-----

	supported need being met at all	supported need being met partially	supported need being met fully	applicable
(a) Understanding library user (and non-user) behaviors more thoroughly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) Using new and existing data to better connect programs, collections, and services with residents.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) Creating physical spaces and digital presences that are transformational.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) Training for library staff at all levels.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) Providing an appealing library environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(f) Maintaining current technology, devices, & hardware for users.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(g) Adopting statewide tools and resources that improve library efficiency.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(h) Enhancing statewide networks and connections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. What factors helped to *facilitate progress* towards needs being met related to Strengthening Capacity?

10. What factors *inhibited progress* towards needs being met related to Strengthening Capacity?

11. *To what extent do you feel LSTA funds have supported your library in achieving the following outcomes as it relates to Strengthening Capacity?*

Outcome	LSTA funds have not supported outcome being achieved at all	LSTA funds have supported outcome being achieved partially	LSTA funds have supported outcome being achieved fully	Not applicable
(a) Library staff have improved skills that enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) Library users have improved information and digital literacy skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) Libraries use new and existing data to make data driven decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) Libraries offer or expand programs and services that are responsive to their communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) More libraries take the lead in conducting their own needs assessments, strategic planning, and implementation strategies for their strategic plan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(f) Libraries improve alignment between the user's physical and virtual experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. What factors helped to *facilitate progress* towards achieving these outcomes related to Strengthening Capacity?

12. What factors *inhibited progress* towards achieving these outcomes related to Strengthening Capacity?

The **Expanding Access Goal** states that North Carolinians will have expanded access to resources for learning and success in school, work, and life.

13. Broadly, to what extent do you feel LSTA funding has supported progress towards the Expanding Access goal for your library?

- LSTA funds have not supported any progress towards this goal for your library.
- LSTA funds have supported this goal being partially achieved.
- LSTA funds have supported this goal being fully achieved.

14. To what extent do you feel LSTA funds have supported your library in meeting the following needs as it relates to Expanding Access?

Need	LSTA funds have not supported need being met at all	LSTA funds supported need being met partially	LSTA funds supported need being met fully	Not applicable
(a) Community members can easily discover library materials and resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) Community members can access library materials and resources online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) Community members have been utilizing North Carolina’s digitized collections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) Cultural heritage, historic, and special collection materials have been made readily available.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) Community members have access to statewide electronic resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(f) Community members have access to technology and bandwidth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Need	LSTA funds have not supported need being met at all	LSTA funds supported need being met partially	LSTA funds supported need being met fully	Not applicable
(g) Community members have access to information and digital literacy skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(h) Community members have access to creative library spaces like learning commons and maker spaces.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(i) Library users have improved alignment between the physical and virtual library experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. What factors helped to *facilitate progress* towards needs being met related to Expanding Access?

16. What factors *inhibited progress* towards needs being met related to Expanding Access?

17. To what extent do you feel LSTA funds have supported your library in achieving the following outcomes as it relates to Expanding Access?

Outcome	LSTA funds have not supported outcomes being achieved	LSTA funds have supported outcomes being achieved partially	LSTA funds have supported outcomes being achieved fully	Not applicable
(a) North Carolinians have easy access to library materials and resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) Community members have improved information and digital literacy skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) North Carolinians have easy access to an	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Outcome	LSTA funds have not supported outcomes being achieved	LSTA funds have supported outcomes being achieved partially	LSTA funds have supported outcomes being achieved fully	Not applicable
increased number of North Carolina's digitized collections.				
(d) Libraries have increased capacity to digitize and preserve their collections.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) Community members have increased access to creative library spaces in their communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(f) Library users have improved alignment between the physical and virtual library experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(g) The digital divide in North Carolina has been reduced.				
<i>**Please provide more detail around your efforts to reduce the digital divide in the box below**</i>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. What factors helped to *facilitate progress* towards achieving these outcomes related to Expanding Access?

19. What factors *inhibited progress* towards achieving these outcomes related to Expanding Access?

The **Community Engagement** Goal states that North Carolinians will have libraries that are more effective because they cooperate, coordinate, collaborate, and communicate to help the community address its needs.

20. Broadly, to what extent do you feel LSTA funding has supported progress towards the Community Engagement goal for your library?

- LSTA funds have not supported any progress towards this goal for your library
- LSTA funds have supported this goal being partially achieved
- LSTA funds have supported this goal being fully achieved

21. To what extent do you feel LSTA funds have supported your library in meeting the following needs as it relates to Community Engagement?

Need	LSTA funds have not supported need being met	LSTA funds supported need being met partially	LSTA funds supported need being met fully	Not applicable
(a) The Library has given assistance identifying and developing partnerships.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) The library has been successful in keeping the community aware of the resources and/or services they provide.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) The library has been seen as a significant partner in community decision making.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) The library has leveraged resources and skills of various community service entities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(e) The library has been successful at providing shared community spaces to their patrons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(f) The library has been successful at supporting community needs and providing subject expertise to their patrons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. What factors helped to *facilitate progress* towards meeting these needs related to Community Engagement?

23. What factors *inhibited progress* towards meeting these needs related to Community Engagement?

24. To what extent do you feel LSTA funds have supported your library in achieving the following outcomes as it relates to Community Engagement?

Outcome	LSTA funds have not supported outcomes being achieved	LSTA funds have supported outcomes being achieved partially	LSTA funds have supported outcomes being achieved fully	Not applicable
(a) Libraries are involved in an increased number of collaborative initiatives.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(b) Communities consider the library a valuable partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(c) Communities consider the library an expert on community services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
(d) Communities consider the library an essential community service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for your Five-Year Plan activities?

25. Library workforce (current and future)

- Yes (please explain) _____
- No

26. Individuals living below the poverty line

- Yes (please explain) _____
- No

27. Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed

- Yes (please explain) _____
- No

28. Ethnic or minority populations

- Yes (please explain) _____
- No

29. Immigrants/refugees
- Yes (please explain) _____
 - No
30. Individuals with disabilities
- Yes (please explain) _____
 - No
31. Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills
- Yes (please explain) _____
 - No
32. Families
- Yes (please explain) _____
 - No
33. Children (aged 0-5)
- Yes (please explain) _____
 - No

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) has national priorities for the LSTA grant program, associated with the focal areas below. Please indicate the extent that LSTA funding has supported your library in achieving outcomes that address each of the following:

34. **Lifelong Learning.** Activities may range from the provision of instructional information resources to direct instructional services delivered by libraries or in partnership with local entities with the goal of transferring knowledge or skills to advance educational aims. *The intent is to improve users' formal education and improve users' general knowledge and skills.*
- Results do not address focal area at all.
 - Results partially address focal area.
 - Results fully address focal area.
35. **Information Access.** Activities broaden public access to content through the purchase or original development of information resources (e.g., databases, computer technology). *The intent is to improve users' ability to discover information resources and improve users' ability to obtain and use information resources.*
- Results do not address focal area at all.
 - Results partially address focal area.
 - Results fully address focal area.
36. **Institutional Capacity.** Activities aim at modernizing existing libraries and/or supporting the development of sound policies, organizational structures, and effective methods of management and revenue development to improve the efficiency of library services. *The intent is to improve the library workforce, improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure, and improve library operations.*
- Results do not address focal area at all.
 - Results partially address focal area.
 - Results fully address focal area.

37. **Employment and Economic Development.** Activities address economic needs of individuals and communities. *The intent is to improve users’ ability to use resources and apply information for employment support and improve users’ ability to use and apply business resources.*

- Results do not address focal area at all.
- Results partially address focal area.
- Results fully address focal area.

38. **Human Services.** Activities may range from the provision of instructional information resources to direct services; however, these activities are focused on providing resources to remediate social problems and improve participants’ quality of life. *The intent is to improve users’ ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family, or household finances; improve users’ ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health and wellness; and improve users’ ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills.*

- Results do not address focal area at all.
- Results partially address focal area.
- Results fully address focal area.

39. **Civic Engagement.** Activities improve users’ ability to engage in their communities. *The intent is to improve users’ ability to participate in their community, and improve users’ ability to participate in community conversations around topics of concern.*

- Results do not address focal area at all.
- Results partially address focal area.
- Results fully address focal area.

40. To what extent do you feel the COVID-19 pandemic . . .

Impact	Not at all	A little	A lot
impacted the implementation of your LSTA-funded activities? Please explain: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
impacted the outcomes of your LSTA-funded activities? Please explain: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
propelled innovations that you plan to sustain over time? Please explain: _____	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

41. Does your library have any formal mechanisms to share successes and lessons learned with other LSTA grantees?

- Yes (Please explain) _____
- No

42. What do you see as the greatest challenges and barriers to applying for an LSTA grant?

43. What resources do you feel would be most useful in helping to address challenges around applying for an LSTA grant? *Select all that apply.*

- Staffing to apply
- Staffing to implement
- Space
- Time
- Matching funding
- Sustaining after project ends
- Other _____

44. Please provide more detail around how the resources you named would be helpful in applying for LSTA funding:

45. Do you plan to apply for LSTA funds again?

- Yes
- No (please explain) _____

46. Is there anything else you'd like us to know about your LSTA grant, and/or the LSTA grant process overall?

Appendix D4 - LSTA Patron Survey

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your experiences and perceptions about your local library. This survey is being administered to library-goers throughout the state, and the information will be used by the State Library of North Carolina to improve library services and make decisions around where best to target resources.

1. What is the name of the library that you use?

2. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or of Spanish origin?
 - Yes
 - No
3. How would you describe yourself? (Select all that apply)
 - American Indian or Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - White
4. Are you currently a (Select all that apply):
 - K-12 student
 - College/graduate student
 - Parent
 - Employed
 - Differently - abled
5. How long have you been a patron at this library?
 - Less than one month
 - 1 - 6 months
 - 6 months to a year
 - Over a year
6. How often do you use library services?
 - Once a week
 - Several times a month
 - Every couple of months
7. What is the primary reason(s) you use the library (Select all that apply):
 - Books for myself
 - Books for children
 - For shared spaces
 - For programs and services
 - Other potential reasons

Display This Question if: What is the primary reason(s) you use the library (select all that apply): = Books for myself

8. How do you use books for yourself at the library?
- personal reading
 - reading for my profession
 - reading for school

Display This Question if: What is the primary reason(s) you use the library (select all that apply): = Books for children

9. How do you use books for children at the library?
- for children's independent reading
 - to read to

Display This Question if: What is the primary reason(s) you use the library (select all that apply): = For shared spaces

10. How do you use shared spaces at the library?
- meetings for my work
 - meetings with my community
 - meetings for school

Display This Question if: What is the primary reason(s) you use the library (select all that apply): = For programs and services

11. How do you use programs and services at the library? (Select all that apply)
- Story time
 - Clubs (book clubs, game clubs, coding clubs)
 - Instruction classes

Display This Question if: What is the primary reason(s) you use the library (select all that apply): = Other potential reasons

12. What other reason(s) do you use the library?
- access to internet / computer / books
 - to tutor/be tutored
 - to meet up with friends
 - Other _____

13. Have you experienced any barriers to accessing or utilizing the library?
- Yes
 - No

Display This Question if: Have you experienced any barriers to accessing or utilizing the library? = Yes

14. Please select the barrier(s) that you face to accessing or utilizing the library.
- Distance
 - Limited number of locations
 - Lack of transportation
 - Hours of library services are inaccessible
 - Fines and fees

- Library policies
- Lack of literacy and/or digital literacy skills
- Other (write in) _____

15. Are there aspects of your library that you feel should be improved?

- Yes
- No

Display This Question if: Are there aspects of your library that you feel should be improved? = Yes

16. What aspects of your library do you feel should be improved? (Select all that apply)

- Helpfulness of onsite library staff
- Using the checkout process
- Having more convenient hours
- Greater selection of the type of books I'm interested in
- Reduced waitlist times
- More diverse populations represented in book options
- The process of placing holds on books
- Other (write in) _____

17. How open or receptive do you perceive your library is to receiving feedback from patrons?

- I am not aware of any opportunities to provide feedback to my library
- My library offers opportunity for feedback, but doesn't seek it out
- My library seeks out and seems to welcome feedback from users

Display This Question if: How open/receptive do you perceive your library is to receiving feedback from patrons? = I am not aware of any opportunities to provide feedback to my library

18. Have you made suggestions to your library about how they could better meet your needs?

- Yes
- No (please explain why) _____

Display This Question if: Have you made suggestions to your library about how they could better meet your needs? = Yes

19. Did the library follow up with a response?

- Yes
- No

Display This Question if: Did the library follow up with a response? = Yes

20. What was the outcome?

- response but no action taken
- response and action taken

21. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

My library . . .	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
provides an appealing library environment.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
maintains current technology, devices, and hardware for users.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
provides exceptional library programs and services.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has improved my information and digital literacy skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
has programs and services that are responsive to my community.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
supports alignment between my physical and virtual experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

22. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your library?

At my library . . .	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
community members can have easy access to library materials and resources.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
community members can access library materials and resources online.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
cultural heritage, historic, and special collection materials are made readily available.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
community members have access to technology and high-speed internet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
community members have opportunities to improve information and digital literacy skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
community members have access to creative library spaces like learning commons and maker spaces.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

23. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

My library . . .	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
has been successful in keeping the community aware of the resources and/or services they provide.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

24. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
I feel welcome in my library.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communities consider the library a valuable partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communities consider the library an essential community service.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My library has helped to improve equitable access to technology and internet (e.g., the "digital divide")	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix D5 – Post-Interview Survey

Thank you again for your time and candid thoughts during our LSTA interview. Our conversations were rich with information that will help to build a robust evaluation and inform our needs assessment for the next SLNC Five-Year Plan.

As we mentioned, there are a few required elements of the IMLS evaluation that lend themselves better to a written survey than conversation. The following questions ask about a) focal subgroups of LSTA activities; b) alignment with IMLS national priorities; and c) LSTA activities with an explicit focus on equity.

The survey should take less than 10 minutes. We sincerely appreciate all that you are doing to support this evaluation.

1. Please enter your name

2. Please indicate your role pertaining to SLNC's LSTA Five-Year Plan

- Project Manager
- Leadership
- Advisory Committee

3. Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for your Five-Year Plan activities?

Group	No	Yes
Library workforce (current and future)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals living below the poverty line	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ethnic or minority populations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigrants/refugees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Families	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Children (aged 0-5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School-aged youth (aged 6-17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Do you think that the focus on these particular groups fully meets the needs of North Carolina's diverse population?
- Yes
 - No

If: Do you think that the focus on these particular groups fully meets the needs of North Carolina's diverse population? = No

5. Please elaborate on the ways in which this focus does not meet the needs of North Carolina's diverse population.

6. The IMLS has six focal areas associated with its' national priorities for the LSTA grant program, listed below. Please indicate the extent to which you feel your Five-Year Plan activities have, or will, achieve results that address the six focal areas. Additional space is provided under each focal area for optional elaboration on your answers.

Focal area	Results do not address focal area at all	Results address focal area partially	Results address focal area fully
<p>Lifelong Learning. Activities may range from the provision of instructional information resources to direct instructional services delivered by libraries or in partnership with local entities with the goal of transferring knowledge or skills to advance educational aims.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Information Access. Activities broaden public access to content through the purchase or original development of information resources (e.g., databases, computer technology).</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<p>Institutional Capacity. Activities aim at modernizing existing libraries and/or supporting the development of sound policies, organizational structures, and effective methods of management and revenue development to improve the efficiency of library services.</p>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Focal area	Results do not address focal area at all	Results address focal area partially	Results address focal area fully
Employment and Economic Development. Activities address the economic needs of individuals and communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Human Services. Activities may range from the provision of instructional information resources to direct services; however, these activities are focused on providing resources to remediate social problems and improve participants' quality of life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civic Engagement. Activities improve users' ability to engage in their communities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Display This Question if: Please indicate your role pertaining to SLNC's LSTA Five-Year Plan = Advisory Committee

7. The final four questions of this survey aim to get a better sense of the ways in which LSTA-funded projects or activities are driving equity in North Carolina communities. We greatly appreciate your candid responses.

Display This Question if: Please indicate your role pertaining to SLNC's LSTA Five-Year Plan = Advisory Committee

8. Thinking across the communities you serve, where do you see the greatest unmet need for(s) libraries to provide targeted supports specific to addressing issues of equity? [open-ended]

Display This Question if: Please indicate your role pertaining to SLNC's LSTA Five-Year Plan = Advisory Committee

9. In what ways can you envision local and state libraries working toward meeting community needs around equity going forward? [open-ended]

Display This Question if: Please indicate your role pertaining to SLNC's LSTA Five-Year Plan = Advisory Committee

10. What types of challenges or barriers have you experienced/do you foresee around your organization's ability to address issues of equity? [open-ended]

Display This Question if: Please indicate your role pertaining to SLNC's LSTA Five-Year Plan = Advisory Committee

11. What types of supports would help to mitigate these potential challenges?

Appendix E. Survey Demographics

LSTA Stakeholder Survey - Location of Survey Respondents

Library Location ⁵	Number of survey respondents	Percent of survey respondents
Rural	94	46.53
Urban	105	51.98
Mostly rural	2	0.99
Mostly urban	0	-
Mixed	1	0.50
Total	202	100.00

LSTA Stakeholder Survey - Library Type

Type of Library	Number of survey respondents	Percent of survey respondents
NCICU	18	10.00
Community College	17	14.66
Public	66	56.90
UNC System	12	10.34
Total	113	91.90

⁵ To define a library as rural or urban, we mapped the library to the county or counties it served using the [NC Department of Health and Human Services](#) categorization. If a library served more than one county that had both urban and rural categorizations, the library was categorized as mostly urban or rural according to the ratio of urban to rural counties that they served. If a library served the same number of urban and rural counties, it was classified as mixed.

Patron Survey - Location of Survey Respondents

Library Location	Number of survey respondents	Percent of survey respondents
Rural	13	15.66
Urban	70	84.34
Total	83	100.00

Appendix F. Qualitative Codes

Theme
<i>Retrospective Questions</i>
Strengthening Capacity / Expanding Access / Community Engagement
Goal Progress
Example illustrating goal progress
Goal facilitators
Goal challenges
Strategies for addressing challenges
<i>Process Questions</i>
SPR data usage
Other data usage
Five-Year Plan modifications
SPR data sharing
2013-2017 data sharing
<i>Needs Assessment</i>
2023-2027 Five-Year Plan
Greatest needs around library services in NC
Alignment to previous Five-Year Plan
Barriers/Challenges
Supports
<i>Context</i>
COVID-19
Sociopolitical factors
Equity

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