



## Minnesota LSTA Five-Year Plan

**2023-2027**

State Library Services

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## Mission Statement

State Library Services partners with libraries to achieve equity and excellence in our collective work for all Minnesotans.

## Needs Assessment Overview

This needs assessment includes information from the Library Services and Technology Act 2018-22 Five-Year Evaluation Report completed in March 2022 for Minnesota State Library Services (SLS). It also draws from ten interviews completed with key stakeholders as part of State Library Services' five-year strategic plan. Interview participants worked in a variety of roles, with different communities, and in different geographic areas of the state. The purpose of the interviews was to gain a better understanding from SLS partners of the successes and areas for improvement in their work with SLS, and to identify areas where State Library Services can expand support for its partners in the 2023-2027 strategic plan. We also draw on data from an environmental scanning workshop completed in April 2022 with participants of the strategic planning workshop.

## Existing Stakeholder Needs

At various points in the evaluation process, respondents were asked what additional support they would like to have from State Library Services in the future, or how they thought Library Service and Technology Act (LSTA) funds could be effectively used in the future. Their responses can be grouped into the following themes:

### Need 1: Clarification of State Library Services' scope of work

- Participants reported that while communication practices at SLS have improved in recent years, there is still confusion around both SLS' scope and mission. Some said there is also confusion around the organizational boundaries between SLS, regional libraries, and partner organizations, like Minitex.
- Additionally, some participants responded that they do not always know who to reach out to when they have a question for SLS. Some suggested being more intentional about consolidating information about SLS to a centralized place that not only details relevant information about SLS' work, but also clearly delineates the different job responsibilities of SLS staff.

**Data sources that identified need:** Stakeholder interviews, environmental scanning workshop

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 2, 7, 8

### Need 2: Additional collaboration or partnership

- Respondents shared that there is a need to strengthen partnerships with rural, regional, and local libraries to broaden resources available to these libraries, to better meet the needs of these libraries (e.g., professional development, programming and services, communication), and to identify where these libraries fit into LSTA goals.
- Better connections are needed between school and public libraries; library educators statewide; legacy programs at libraries and schools; and SLS and school library media specialists to identify support and communication needs.

- There is a need to expand opportunities for library workers and grantees to connect with one another more often, including opportunities for mutual learning and knowledge sharing.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 4, 5, 6

### **Need 3: Statewide programming support**

- Interview participants felt that metropolitan areas are over-represented within strategic planning, funding, and general support. Interview participants highlighted that rural communities have unique needs and do not always feel represented within SLS and other library efforts. Participants specifically highlighted the challenges that rural libraries have in terms of access with communities having to travel large distances to go to a library.
- Respondents expressed a need for more coordinated statewide programming across libraries in Minnesota including programming to support all ages and cultures, programming for English language learners, and programming to address media literacy and technology.
- Respondents would like to see SLS develop programming that can be delivered at the local level, such as additional traveling exhibits or mobile programming.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 4, 5, 6

### **Need 4: Prioritization of digital equity, broadband access, and literacy efforts**

- The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the need to address issues of digital equity and literacy statewide. This includes a need for infrastructure, access to technology, building library’s digital collection, and digital literacy training. And increasing access all Minnesotans, including low-income, non-English speaking populations, and aging adults in rural communities.
- Interview participants highlighted the increasing importance of virtual programming and digital information in coming years.
- Interview participants stressed the need for libraries to stay competitive in an increasingly virtual world. Coming out of the pandemic, there is more competition for information.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 1, 4, 5, 6, 7

### **Need 5: Professional development opportunities for library staff**

- Participants expressed the desire for continued learning and training opportunities from State Library Services. Specific requested training topics included diversity, equity, and inclusion,
- There is a need for racial equity training, training on implementation of equity initiatives, working with immigrant populations and patrons who don’t speak English as their first language, digital equity and inclusion, soft skills and interpersonal skills, how to use data in their work, and continued learning to stay up to date on best practices in libraries
- Respondents would like to see SLS offer online library meetups and virtual, asynchronous professional development opportunities, including to revive the “Library Skills 101” trainings/new staff training.

- Library staff at all educational levels need training and support including better training for library staff to deliver programming.
- Stakeholders and staff also need to connections to external training and professional development opportunities.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 3

### **Need 6: Increased SLS communications, outreach and coordination**

- There is a need for improved communication about available programming and resources, grants, equity, and professional development opportunities.
- Respondents would like to see SLS communicate directly with all library staff, as communications from SLS are not always adequately shared below library leadership.
- There is a need to improve the perception and understanding of library services across the state through creating a statewide marketing campaign about public libraries.
- State Library Services needs to continue to build on improvements in its communication and outreach efforts. Specific ideas included systematizing outreach activities, so they are not dependent upon individual relationships; exploring creative mechanisms to engage in outreach, like a podcast that discusses SLS' work; and continuing to build online programming.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 2, 7

### **Need 7: Improved grant making process**

- The grant making process needs to be simplified; including grant applications and assistance with grant writing.
- There is a need for one-on-one meetings for those interested in applying for LSTA grants.
- Stakeholders would like to see SLS disseminate information on the LSTA-funded programs and practices libraries across the state are implementing. There was a suggestion to use a format similar to the 90-Second Newbery Film Festival to communicate what was done, what worked, lessons learned, and how to scale efforts.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 1, 2, 4, 7,

### **Need 8: Advocacy**

- SLS needs to continue to improve its efforts related to promoting the successes of the state's libraries and advocating for libraries at the Capitol.
- Stakeholders want to see SLS speak up for adequate staffing levels, particularly in schools. Advocacy is needed at the state level and with library leadership. SLS needs to more intentionally communicate about the challenges facing libraries around staffing and funding to decision makers at the state level.

- Administrators, school boards, staff at the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), and other stakeholders need to build a greater awareness of the importance of libraries, what libraries are capable of, how to implement initiatives in libraries, and the impact libraries can have.
- Respondents wanted SLS to not only play a bigger role in advocacy, but to engage in more general promotion of the successes of libraries across the state. Specific areas of desired advocacy included broadband access, digital equity and inclusion, addressing censorship efforts, and providing general support to libraries in seeking funding. More data support from State Library Services, specifically around using the existing data to create compelling narratives about the importance of public libraries.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 2, 4, 7

### **Need 9: Statewide collection development**

- Respondents want SLS to continue support for and to expand e-book collections (or other online collections) to share content more widely, including content located on other platforms (e.g., Overdrive). Respondents described these collections as invaluable, particularly for schools.
- There are concerns over the growing efforts around censorship and challenges to intellectual freedom, with a rise in campaigns at local libraries to ban specific books. Respondents requested specific materials and a need for support from State Library Services to respond to such efforts.
- Stakeholders suggested legislation to regulate the prices of e-books because libraries struggle to obtain reasonable pricing from publishers.
- Additional support is needed for developing and sorting collections for different audiences, rather than relying on numerous databases with different materials.
- Respondents would like more collections about different cultures so that patrons have increased opportunities to connect with other cultures.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 1, 2, 5, 6

### **Need 10: Elimination of existing barriers to access**

- Interview participants raised a number of concerns related to the physical accessibility of libraries, including older architecture creating barriers for disabled people to access buildings, the physical accessibility of library space (i.e. some circulation desks being at “standing height”), and transit-access to libraries, especially in rural communities.
- There remain substantial challenges around digital equity and literacy, especially for aging adults.
- Some stakeholders highlighted concerns for aging populations, describing pervasive ageism across the library system where older people’s needs are not centered or taken seriously.
- Immigrant populations do not always have a whole understanding of the resources libraries offer, primarily their existence as a resource that exists for free. These issues are compounded by language barriers between patrons and staff.
- There are currently few inclusivity mechanisms for connections with tribal libraries.
- Libraries are not diverse and overwhelmingly staffed by white females. At times, librarians from these backgrounds are at times not welcoming, or do not create a welcoming environment for marginalized communities.

- Generally, not all people understand the full scope of what libraries can provide. Some respondents highlighted a perception that libraries are meant for middle-class white communities.
- Late fees and fines are deterrents for low-income people to taking full advantage of libraries.

**Data sources that identified need:** Evaluation report, environmental scanning workshop, stakeholder interviews

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 1, 5, 6, 7

## Strategic Plan Methodology and Documentation

State Library Services partnered with an external consultant, The Improve Group, to conduct an innovative and collaborative strategic planning process through the Technology of Participation (ToP) approach called Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP). PSP uses effective group facilitation to help diverse groups establish a common vision, uncover barriers, define effective strategies, and outline concrete steps to achieve organizational goals. By using PSP, SLS was able to:

- Recognize and honor the contributions of various stakeholders;
- Discuss and evaluate more information, ideas, and data in less time;
- Pool individual contributions into larger, more informative patterns; and
- Celebrate diversity while minimizing polarization and conflict.

By using the PSP approach, The Improve Group helped SLS create a comprehensive and “participant-owned” strategic plan that all team members are committed to realizing. The strategic plan outlines SLS’s environmental scan, practical vision, underlying contradictions, as well as new strategic directions and future actions to achieve the plan.

### Strategic planning participants

Participants included a variety of stakeholders including SLS staff and team members who collaboratively designed the strategic planning approach and continuously moved the work forward. Various staff from libraries around the state of Minnesota – including often under-represented voices of rural and BIPOC librarians, members of local Friends of Libraries groups, library science educators, and other Minnesota Department of Education staff who represent a wide range of expertise and experience. In this way the planning process itself also served as a needs assessment from those who understand the work best and work at each level of the profession and institutions that benefit from the work of State Library Services.

### Strategic planning workshop: envisioning the future

Workshop participants brainstormed hopes and aspirations for what will be in place in five years because of SLS’s actions. Individual ideas were generated, themed, and then collaboratively named through consensus building facilitation to illustrate what the vision is for SLS in the next five years.

In the next five years, SLS’s work will be to support:

- Building a shared foundation
- Libraries to actively shape their narrative



- Increased investment in libraries
- Liberatory library services for all Minnesotans
- Expanding the scope and accessibility of library staff training
- Developing an ecosystem of sustainable and mutually beneficial partnerships
- Expanded capacity and deeper engagement
- Unequivocal and unapologetic support for all communities

## Strategic planning workshop: identifying roadblocks

The strategic planning workgroup then identified underlying contradictions or roadblocks to success. Unlike straightforward problems that can be solved, contradictions often relate to patterns in departmental history, culture, practice, or to the environment or circumstances in which the team works. Individual ideas were brainstormed and discussed to reveal underlying contradictions and challenges that could prevent SLS from realizing its vision. These included:

- Prioritization of short-term goals over long-term sustainability
- Toxic neutrality prioritized over advocating for libraries
- Untested assumptions by libraries and about libraries
- Structural barriers to self-determination
- System failures that impede innovation, disempower staff, and perpetuate hierarchy
- Lack of conviction can prevent librarians and libraries from performing to their full potential
- Divisive distractions

## Goals

State Library Services' 2023-27 LSTA Five-Year Plan establishes overarching goals that address Minnesota's needs. As described below, each goal has associated projects that will shape SLS use of LSTA funds during the next plan period. Each project uses Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funds in one or more ways to help achieve the goals:

- **State Library Services initiatives:** A portion of the allotment supports State Library Services staff salaries as well as contracts that fund programs, training, and professional development for library staff statewide. State Library Services staff carry out projects that build statewide capacity for library services to youth; performance measures and outcomes; racial equity in library services; staffing and operations; and improvements in library services that rely on broadband. Initiatives support high-value activities that can strengthen all of Minnesota's libraries.
- **Statewide initiatives:** LSTA funds (for example, grants and contracts) are used to support projects that provide direct library services that can benefit people in all areas of the state. This includes the Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library, a program of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled (NLS). The library provides direct service to eligible Minnesotans who cannot read standard print material due to a visual, physical, or reading disability. Statewide resource sharing through the MNLINK and E-books Minnesota are both provided by Minitex at the University of Minnesota. Interlibrary Loan allows patrons of participating Minnesota libraries to access a wide array of information resources in a range of formats whenever and wherever the information is needed.

- **Sub-grant opportunities:** State Library Services distributes LSTA funds through competitive, targeted, and single source grants to public, academic, school, or special libraries or library consortia. Annual competitive grant rounds give libraries and schools a chance to pilot projects that creatively address diverse community needs and fulfill the goals of the five-year plan. LSTA mini-grants allow libraries to initiate smaller projects that satisfy five-year plan goals and projects that support innovative learning and library services.
- **Administrative costs:** Minnesota’s administrative funds pay a portion of the LSTA coordinator’s salary as well as agency costs associated with administering the LSTA program and sub-grants.

## Prioritizing Goals

Minnesota’s goals are designed to increase the impact of SLS's work, initially through defining the scope of SLS in a new age of community needs and librarians’ evolving work. Increased leverage and influence can then serve as a bridge to the second goal of partnering for reimagined access, to ensure that marginalized communities, including BIPOC, LGBTQIA, and rural communities that may be struggling to keep their libraries open and communities engaged, can fully access libraries. The third goal also serves as a bridge to better reach and inform communities of the value of libraries, keeping libraries central to the communities they serve in ways that acknowledge their importance and therefore make it more politically challenging for local governments to reduce resource flow to libraries around the state. Each of these goals serves as a pathway to the next, and thus are prioritized as such.

### Goal A: Building coalitions to increase collective impact

State Library Services will lead the way for libraries to come together to strategically create networks across the state to forward the work of libraries and librarians in meeting community needs. Currently, many stakeholders are unclear about the work, scope, and contributions of SLS, including its positioning within the Minnesota Department of Education. By reviewing the scope and work of the department through a strategic lens, SLS and MDE will work together to build a higher level of coherence that will strengthen SLS efforts and political positioning in order to have the greatest impact towards meeting the needs of their stakeholders.

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8

**Aligned with Minnesota Need(s):** State Library Services’ scope of work and the job responsibilities of staff are unclear to our stakeholders; Additional collaboration or partnership; Statewide programming support; Professional development opportunities for staff; Increased SLS communications, outreach and coordination; Improved grant making process; Advocacy; Statewide collection development.

#### A.1: Defining our scope

SLS collaborates with a wide variety of stakeholders from federal, state, local, and tribal governments; across library types; and within a spectrum of communities. Refining this broad approach will bring clarity to stakeholders regarding SLS’s priorities, capabilities, processes, and procedures. This work begins internally with development of SLS staff responsibilities, then extends outward into the agency and greater library community.

## Activities

In service to reviewing its scope, work, positioning, and structure, SLS will engage in activities inclusive of, but not limited to:

- Restructure and expand SLS staffing to target support of school and tribal libraries
- Develop and implement a communication plan to ensure wider awareness of SLS services through various channels, including the newsletter, website, and regular meetings
- Strengthen coordination among state and regional library and multicounty multitype systems to better align initiatives to the capabilities of each entity
- Establish SLS processes and protocols that link to staff roles and not particular individuals, to ease turnover and standardization of work

**Timeline:** Over the first year, SLS will review and (re)define the scope of its work. Over the remaining four years they will continue to refine and make updates as needed. Over the full five years SLS will work on strengthening coordination and implementing the communications plan.

## Benefits and Outcomes

Through implementing these initiatives, the ecosystem of libraries will benefit across the state of Minnesota in various ways. Cohesion and clarity across and within various agencies will lead to more effective work and better service for Minnesota's stakeholders at all levels. The system will be better able to withstand political transitions and shifts in priorities and agendas.

SLS will be better positioned to formalize the prioritization of challenges and opportunities. Plans, processes, and materials will be in place to assist the agency in preparing for and dealing with staff transitions. The effectiveness of staff will increase through having clearly defined, documented roles oriented to specific elements of the work.

Through widening engagement, SLS reaches new stakeholders and promotes equity for diverse populations across the state. This includes strengthening support for tribal library programs.

### A.2: Developing staff through connection

Through creatively developing strategic connections across the library workforce in Minnesota, SLS will redistribute opportunities to accelerate progress towards library goals and equitable access. This approach will be multi-layered, allowing each type of stakeholder to have opportunities to connect.

## Activities

As a key partner in developing and creating connection opportunities, State Library Services will engage in strategic activities that include but are not limited to:

- Create more leadership training and mentoring opportunities for all librarians, library staff, and library boards.
- Support the efforts of library workers to educate and inform stakeholders about issues that affect libraries, librarians, and library users.

- Provide opportunities for workers across libraries to connect and share ideas
- Provide a space to have difficult conversations about our untested assumptions about each other as librarians and library systems
- Build upon the 2022 inaugural MN BIPOC Library Workers Summit

**Timeline:** Annual and ongoing. Over the next five years, SLS will review possibilities that exist to bring stakeholders together to amplify development opportunities through connection.

### **Benefits and Outcomes**

The implementation of these activities will lead to stronger library services due to a more informed and equipped workforce. All levels of library workers will have a voice that is heard and used to inform decisions and program implementation. There will be an increased level of confidence in library staff and organizations. Library users will be better served by a happier, healthier workforce, which includes improved retention for BIPOC library workers to enhance the sense of belonging, safety, and support.

### **A.3: Organizational positioning**

SLS is unique within the Minnesota Department of Education in reaching people of all ages, from birth to infinity, in a diverse array of communities. Raising the visibility of SLS within MDE and the enterprise will bring greater support to learning that happens throughout the lifetime.

### **Activities**

- Provide data and information to internal leadership about current issues affecting libraries
- Provide data and consultation to library workers who are navigating challenging circumstances or seeking out new opportunities
- Establish baseline and ongoing data collection related to school library services and staffing. Research position and structure of SLAAs located in peer states to identify new strategies for interagency collaboration

**Timeline:** Annual and ongoing. Over the next five years, SLS will explore the possibilities for raising the visibility and interagency collaborations for SLS to better serve its stakeholders.

### **Benefits and Outcomes**

Implementing these activities will increase awareness of the issues impacting libraries while creating a mechanism for resolution. Library workers and libraries will be more empowered to address difficulties arising within their own organizations.

SLS will have the resources to impact the work of libraries and librarians across the state. This will maximize SLS's ability to work on behalf of libraries to benefit the communities they serve. School library data is shared and discussed with library stakeholders.

## Goal B: Partnering for reimagined access

State Library Services will strategically engage in community and government partnerships to reduce or eliminate barriers to information access for all Minnesotans.

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 1, 2, 4, 8

**Aligned with Minnesota Need(s):** Additional collaboration or partnership; Statewide programming support; Prioritize digital equity, broadband access, and literacy efforts; Professional development opportunities for staff; Improved grant making process; Statewide collection development; Eliminate existing barriers to access

### B.1: Community and government partnerships

Pursuing community and government partnerships intentionally is a means through which libraries can better serve more Minnesotans. Methods of evaluation and assessment will help SLS determine which partnerships are mutually beneficial and which are not.

#### Activities

- Audit LSTA application and reporting procedures
- Review and revise all documentation, including webinar slides
- Ask applicants to address how each project originated within the community
- Include targeted outreach to school and rural libraries during the application process
- Collect and share examples of model partnerships
- Participate in the statewide Digital Equity Plan under the leadership of the Office of Broadband Development
- Liaise between libraries and the Office of the Secretary of State to increase public access to election information
- Systematize statewide public library collaboration with Minnesota Workforce initiatives (CareerForce)

**Timeline:** Annual and ongoing. Auditing the LSTA application and reporting procedures will happen within the first year. Model partnerships will take place over years 3 and 4.

#### Benefits and Outcomes

These activities will lead to more equitable grant making with a process that is clear, accessible, and approachable for applicants. A larger number and wider pool of school and rural libraries will apply for and receive grants. Libraries will work within and promote their precise role as community anchors. Minnesota libraries will be positioned as leaders in digital inclusion and equity, civic engagement, and career development, bringing new resources to these areas.

### B.2: Reducing barriers to library access

State Library Services will help libraries plan, develop, and implement innovative library services and technologies to reduce barriers to access for all Minnesotans. Libraries will continue to be community anchors

that support a higher quality of life for all Minnesotans. The strategic partnerships developed through project B.1 will create innovative access channels and assist communities in using library resources.

### **Activities**

- Identify and prioritize patron groups and communities historically underserved by libraries
- Invest in tribal library development
- Strategize initiatives that support Minnesota’s growing population of older adults
- Engage with libraries to encourage racial equity work
- Enable statewide resource sharing through interlibrary loan and digital collections
- Raise awareness of Minnesota Braille and Talking Book Library (MBTBL) service so more eligible Minnesotans participate in the program
- Promote multi-lingual library services, including support for digital literacy and technology access
- Encouraging relationship-building and programming between school and public librarians

**Timeline:** Annual and ongoing. Over the next five years, SLS will continue to reduce barriers to access for all Minnesotans.

### **Benefits and Outcomes**

The activities enacted will allow more people, including marginalized and underserved populations, to use library services. Interlibrary loan services increase the availability of materials and reduce local collection development costs. Community members will have access to materials and services in formats and languages that best meet their needs. Libraries will better support community members of all ages to achieve life goals and stay connected to their family members and the wider community.

## **Goal C: Refining Narratives to showcase LSTA-Funded Library Contributions to Thriving Communities**

This goal is designed to build off the success of the first two goals. As our communities evolve to become more diverse, more stratified, and more digitized, the work of librarians becomes more complex. State Library Services can support libraries in communicating effectively with decision makers about the full scope of the library’s contributions.

**Aligned with LSTA Purposes and Priorities:** 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8

**Aligned with Minnesota Need(s):** Professional development opportunities for staff; Increased SLS communications, outreach, and coordination; Advocacy; Eliminate existing barriers to access

### **C.1: Communication and Messaging**

Library services are in a constant state of evolution and have new opportunities to share these developments widely and clearly. SLS will refine and target messaging around libraries to build cohesion, create shared goals, and communicate libraries’ value.

## Activities

- Conduct stakeholder mapping to target messaging about libraries
- Develop issue-related education toolkit for stakeholders and partners
- Encourage clear, customizable shared goals to demonstrate qualitative impact
- Provide issue-specific education and data for legislative proposals that support the maintenance/expansion of library services in Minnesota.

**Timeline:** Annual and ongoing. Over the next five years, SLS will improve communication and messaging for libraries and librarians in Minnesota.

## Benefits and Outcomes

Through these activities, external leaders and legislators will have a deeper understanding of the value of libraries within their communities. Libraries will use data to determine the scope and vision of their work, and make data driven decisions to best serve their communities.

Library workers and libraries will articulate the essential value and contributions they offer. Libraries will be leaders in community decision-making processes. Communities will understand how library presence and services benefit all.

## C.2: Investing in the future of the library workforce

SLS will partner with educational institutions and career development organizations to promote librarianship as a desirable career pathway. This work will ensure that library staff represent the diverse populations they serve.

## Activities

- Partner with state workforce initiatives to highlight library career possibilities and library resources
- Support the development of a conduit for recruiting and retaining library workers
- Partner with high schools, colleges and library schools for library career showcases around state
- Invest in professional education programming and support for existing and prospective library staff
- Explore internships and scholarships for individuals considering careers in library work
- Support development of formalized training about libraries and library structures in Minnesota

**Timeline:** Annual and ongoing. Over the next five years, SLS will deepen its connections with library educators and career development organizations to ensure a healthy future workforce.

## Benefits and Outcomes

SLS will support library workforce development to ensure a qualified, prepared, and plentiful pool of library workers. The library workforce will diversify and attract new staff to best serve communities. SLS will strengthen the professional values of librarianship across Minnesota.

## Summary Project Timeline

State Library Services anticipates that all projects will take place throughout 2023-27. Within each year, as described above, project activities are sequenced and may have a differing emphasis. The intent in having each project take place during a five-year time frame is to provide continuity to the library community.

**Table 1: Timeline for Projects over Five Years of Plan**

Project	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
A.1: Defining our scope	X	X	X	0	0
A.2: Developing staff through connection	X	X	X	X	X
A.3: Organizational positioning	X	X	X	X	X
B.1: Community and government partnerships	X	X	X	X	X
B.2: Reducing barriers to library access	X	X	X	X	X
C.1: Communication and messaging	0	X	X	X	X
C.2: Investing in the future of the library workforce	0	X	X	X	X



# Coordination Efforts

## Crosswalk of goals to Measuring Success focal areas

Table 2: Goals Aligned with Measuring Success Focal Areas

Goal	Lifelong Learning	Information Access	Institutional Capacity	Economic & Employment Development	Human Services	Civic Engagement
Goal A: Building coalitions to increase collective impact	X	X	X			X
Goal B: Partnering for reimagined access	X	X	X	X	X	X
Goal C: Changing the narrative to showcase libraries' contributions to thriving communities	X	X	X	X	X	X

## Crosswalk of projects to Measuring Success intents

**Table 3: Goals Aligned with IMLS Measuring Success Intents**

IMLS Measuring Success Intents	Matching Program Goals
Improve users' formal education	A2, C2
Improve users' general knowledge and skills	A2, B2, C2
Improve users' ability to discover information resources	B2, C2
Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources	B1, B2, C2
Improve the library workforce	A2, C2
Improve library's physical and technology infrastructure	B1, B2, C1, C2
Improve library operations	A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2
Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support	B1, B2
Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources	B1, B2
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family, or household finances	B1, B2
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal or family health & wellness	B1, B2
Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills	B1, B2
Improve users' ability to participate in their community	B1, B2, C1
Improve users' ability to participate in community conversations around topics of concern	B1, C1

## Coordination with other state agencies and offices

State Library Services is a division of the Office of Teaching and Learning within the Minnesota Department of Education. Staff work collegially and formally with other MDE divisions such as Academic Standards, Instruction, and Assessment; Adult Basic Education; Expanded Learning; Nutrition Services; Charters; Early Learning Services; School Support, Equity and Opportunity and the Office of Indian Education and the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. State Library Services also works with other state agencies including the Department of Employment and Economic Development (workforce programs and digital inclusion), the Pollution Control Agency (environment sustainability programs), the State Demographic Center (census outreach), and the Office of the Secretary of State (voter engagement). Minitex, a library collaborative located at the University of Minnesota, is a significant partner in providing resource sharing and electronic content platforms. Staffing, program, and distribution costs may be shared among agencies.

## **Evaluation Plan**

### **Evaluation Methodology**

State Library Services will complete State Program Report (SPR) output and outcome evaluation reports annually. The LSTA Coordinator will provide instruction and guidance for SPR reporting criteria to State Library Services staff as well as sub-grantees. Outcome evaluation guidelines aligned with the IMLS Measuring Success initiative will be distributed to grant recipients. Guidelines will include how to choose outcomes, select indicators, collect data, analyze results, and report results. Recommended evaluation tools will include surveys, pre and post-tests, interviews, and observation of program participants.

State Library Services will submit a five-year evaluation to IMLS. Feedback will be requested from grant recipients, applicants who did not receive grants, and stakeholders who did not apply for grants. Evaluation tools will include a survey, interviews, and focus groups or World-Café discussion sessions held at locations throughout the state. Participants will include stakeholders from all types of libraries, including both urban and rural locations for geographic balance, administrative and front-line staff, and library users. Results will be collected, analyzed, and reported by a third party.

### **Outcomes and Indicators**

The following section outlines the expected outcomes of projects under each goal and provides a list of indicators to measure SLS' progress towards meeting those goals and outcomes. The list of indicators is not necessarily exhaustive of potential ways to measure progress, but rather lists potential data points and milestones that will indicate progress towards meeting goals and outcomes.

**Table 4: Crosswalk of Indicators to Projects and Outcomes**

**Evaluating Goal A: Building coalitions to increase collective impact**

**Project A.1: Defining our scope**

Outcomes	Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cohesion and clarity across the various agencies leading to more effective work and better service for Minnesota’s stakeholders at all levels.</li> <li>2. System will be better able to withstand various political transitions and shifts in priorities and agendas.</li> <li>3. Better lens through which to formalize the prioritization of challenges and opportunities.</li> <li>4. Plans, processes, and materials in place to assist the agency in preparing for and dealing with turnover.</li> <li>5. Clearly defined roles and being more formally informed and oriented to the various elements of the work.</li> <li>6. Widening engagement and increasing participation so that SLS reaches new stakeholders and promotes equity for all populations across the state.</li> <li>7. Increase in and strengthening of school and tribal libraries programs and support through greater targeted SLS staff availability.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLS staff has hosted a session to help stakeholders understand SLS’ scope of work. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2)</li> <li>• SLS has hosted an internal SLS Academy. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2)</li> <li>• Through staff meeting notes, decisions are documented based on priorities outlined in the strategic plan. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 3, 4)</li> <li>• SLS has received an increase in relevant requests for services internally and externally. Specifically:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Requests are centrally tracked,</li> <li>○ There is a process for addressing out-of-scope requests (template responses to FAQ),</li> <li>○ Requestors are satisfied with SLS responses (Crosswalk: Outcomes 2, 3, 5, 6)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• SLS proactively engaged with new stakeholders during the five-year strategic plan. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 6, 7)</li> <li>• SLS hosts a session to help stakeholders understand SLS’ scope of work. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 5, 6, 7)</li> <li>• Evaluation survey includes questions about previous engagement with SLS. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 6, 7)</li> <li>• Through the LSTA grantees final report, grantees report that the process was easy and accessible and provide actionable ways to improve the grant process. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 6, 7)</li> <li>• SLS staff’s roles are clearly listed on the SLS website. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 5, 6, 7)</li> <li>• SLS staff regularly reviews team workload and capacity. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 3)</li> </ul>

**Project A.2: Developing staff through connection**

Outcomes	Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Stronger library services due to a more informed and equipped workforce</li> <li>2. All levels of library workers have a voice that is heard and used to inform decisions and program implementation.</li> <li>3. Stakeholders have an increased level of confidence in library staff and organizations.</li> <li>4. Library workers have a happier, healthier workplace, including improved retention for BIPOC library workers to enhance the sense of belonging, safety, and support.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLS tracks staffing levels across the state, staff retention, and levels. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 4)</li> <li>• SLS works with an external partner to develop a Statewide Library Worker Survey. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)</li> <li>• SLS has helped to facilitate connections between library workers across the state and collects data regarding impact. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 2, 3, 4,)</li> <li>• There has been increased attendance at workshops/conferences/other connection opportunities. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)</li> <li>• SLS has collected responses to the Public Library Staff &amp; Diversity Survey every three years (Crosswalk: Outcome 4)</li> <li>• SLS has partnered with the BIPOC advisory group to track BIPOC library worker staffing levels and formally track availability and impact of training and professional development opportunities. (Crosswalk: Outcome 4)</li> </ul>

**Project A.3: Organizational positioning**

Outcomes	Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is increased awareness of the issues impacting libraries while creating a mechanism for resolution.</li> <li>2. Library workers and libraries are more empowered to address difficulties arising within their own organizations.</li> <li>3. SLS has the resources and authority to support the work of libraries and librarians across the state.</li> <li>4. School library data is shared and discussed with library stakeholders.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLS has been consulted and actively involved in shaping MDE legislative agenda. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>• SLS has provided guidance to libraries to address emergent issues common to public, school, and tribal libraries. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 4)</li> <li>• SLS has been explicitly included in the MDE strategic plan. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 3)</li> <li>• State agencies have implemented a standardized classification of library workers in a way that reflects library workers' skills and their essential status to their communities. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 2, 3)</li> <li>• SLS has commissioned a study examining the placement of a state library services agency within state government. (Crosswalk: Outcome 3)</li> <li>• SLS has annually administered a school library survey to school libraries across the state. (Crosswalk: Outcome 4)</li> </ul>

## Evaluating Goal B: Partnering for reimagined access

### Project B.1: Community and government partnerships

Outcomes	Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. SLS implements a more equitable grant making with a process that is clear, accessible, and approachable for applicants.</li> <li>2. There is a larger number and wider pool of school and rural libraries will apply for and receive grants.</li> <li>3. Libraries work within and promote their precise role as community anchors.</li> <li>4. Minnesota libraries are positioned as leaders in digital inclusion and equity, civic engagement, and career development, bringing new resources to these areas.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLS has produced new templates for grant applications, reports, and budgeting. (Crosswalk: Outcome 1)</li> <li>• SLS has conducted an audit of the full LSTA grant making process and revises the process based on findings. (Crosswalk: Outcome 1)</li> <li>• SLS has received more grant applications from rural and school libraries, and these applications have a high rate of acceptance. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 2, 3)</li> <li>• SLS has provided voter engagement training prior to the 2024 general election. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 3, 4)</li> <li>• Increased number of libraries partnering with workforce development organizations. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 3, 4)</li> <li>• Increased number of libraries partnering with senior citizen organizations. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 3, 4)</li> </ul>

### Project B.2: Reducing barriers to access

Outcomes	Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There are more people, especially marginalized and underserved populations, who use library services.</li> <li>2. Interlibrary loan services increase the availability of materials and reduce local collection development costs.</li> <li>3. Community members will have access to materials and services in formats and languages that best meet their needs.</li> <li>4. Libraries will better support community members of all ages to achieve life goals and stay connected to their family members and the wider community.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minitex ILL data:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Rates of borrowing and lending across state (between all libraries)</li> <li>○ Fill rates – how many requests are filled. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• eBooks MN circulation data. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 2, 3)</li> <li>• SLS provides targeted grants to at least 4 tribal college and/or tribal community libraries. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)</li> <li>• Increased # of people with public library cards. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)</li> <li>• SLS solicits data from libraries regarding multilingual collections. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)</li> <li>• Increase number of eligible users of MN Braille and Talking Book Library. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3, 4)</li> </ul>

**Evaluating Goal C: Changing the narrative to showcase libraries' contributions to thriving communities**

**Project C.1: Communication and messaging**

Outcomes	Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Conduct stakeholder mapping to target messaging about libraries</li> <li>2. Develop a public engagement toolkit</li> <li>3. Encourage clear, customizable shared goals to demonstrate qualitative impact</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SLS publishes a public engagement toolkit. (Crosswalk: Outcome 2)</li> <li>• SLS solicits feedback on the usefulness of the public engagement toolkit from library workers.(Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>• MDE’s strategic plan, the Governor’s Broadband Task Force report, and the state digital equity plan include libraries. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>• SLS staff have shared “elevator pitch” about what libraries do and why libraries matter. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 3)</li> </ul>

**Project C.2: Investing in the future of the library workforce**

Outcomes	Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Qualified, prepared, and plentiful pool of library workers.</li> <li>2. The library workforce will diversify and attract new staff to best serve communities.</li> <li>3. SLS will strengthen the professional values of librarianship across Minnesota.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of applicants to both MLIS and bachelor’s programs, particularly from diverse communities. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>• Increase in the number of library internship and practicum opportunities across the state. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>• Increased number of MLIS holders employed in public libraries, particularly in rural libraries. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</li> <li>• MLIS graduate job placement data from St. Catherine University. (Crosswalk: Outcomes 1, 2, 3)</li> </ul>

**Stakeholder Involvement**

State Library Services updated the 2018-22 LSTA Five-Year Plan community needs assessment it conducted for the 2023-27 plan. In the previous assessment, 428 library staff members and administrators responded to an online survey in fall 2016 and 36 participated in one of three listening sessions held in both metropolitan and Greater Minnesota locations in March and April 2017. Ten State Library Services partners who are not library stakeholders were interviewed by phone about community needs related to library services in March and April 2017.



In April 2022, State Library Services conducted ten interviews with stakeholders who work both directly and indirectly with State Library Services. Interview participants worked in a variety of roles, with different communities, and in different geographic areas of the state. The purpose of the interviews was to gain a better understanding from SLS partners of the successes and areas for improvement in their work with SLS, and to identify areas where State Library Services can expand support for its partners in the 2023-2027 strategic plan.

## **Communication and Public Availability**

State Library Services will publish and widely distribute its approved 2023-27 LSTA Five-Year Plan. The published plan will be emailed to library directors and other stakeholders and posted on the Minnesota Department of Education State Library Services' Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) web page. The plan will be announced to the library community in the State Library Services newsletter that includes a link to the website. Staff will present webinars and/or sessions at the annual library association conferences to review the plan with members of the library community. Staff will also review the plan and progress toward achieving its goals with the library community at conferences and meetings at least annually. Anyone requesting information about the state's five-year plan will be encouraged to contact State Library Services to discuss the plan with the Director or LSTA Coordinator.

## **Monitoring**

State Library Services is committed to monitoring its use of LSTA funds in several ways. By completing the annual State Program Report and Financial Status Report, SLS provides detailed information on the use of funds that supports IMLS' Measuring Success initiative and federal regulations. Sub-grants and contracts are developed in line with federal and state grant/contracting requirements and include assurances for sub-grantees and vendors to ensure compliance with state and federal policies, practices, and statutes.

State Library Services follows federal CFR 200 and state of Minnesota policies and procedures for awarding and monitoring LSTA sub-grants. Pre-award risk assessments are conducted on grants over \$25,000. The results are incorporated into grant requirements. The department issues an Official Grant Award Notification and monitors program progress and compliance by requiring recipients to submit interim and final financial and narrative reports on their respective projects and activities. Federal FFATA reporting is completed within 90 days of grant (or contract) execution. Staff members are available to answer questions and concerns for the duration of the grant.

A Grant Services Specialist housed in Agency Finance works with the LSTA Coordinator to manage sub-grants, ensuring that grant documents are aligned with state and federal policies and procedures, and that pre-award risk assessments and fiscal monitoring for grants over \$50,000 are conducted. This helps ensure accountability for the use of funds and that local policies and procedures support federal and state guidelines. State Library Services follows federal records retention requirements for LSTA materials.

SLS has adopted a continuous improvement approach to our work, reviewing processes and procedures on a regular basis to ensure that they are helping us meet our goals in program administration. State Library Services assesses our progress in meeting five-year plan goals annually as part of our budgeting process. Summative evaluation of the five-year plan will tell the story of the impact of federal funds on the lives of Minnesotans.