2013-2017 LSTA Five-Year Plan Evaluation

Mississippi Library Commission

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Evaluation Summary

The Mississippi Library Commission established its 2013-2017 Five-Year LSTA Plan to outline its use of federal LSTA funds and to establish desired goals and outcomes for its programs. This evaluation explores the results of the Commission's efforts in relation to the outcomes and evaluation methods set forth in the plan.

Retrospective Evaluation

1. To what extent did your Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards each goal?

Goal	Status
Building Library Capacity *Consulting, Continuing Education, Network Development*	Partly Achieved
Serving All *Reading Programs, Shared Resources, Talking Books*	Partly Achieved
Empower Libraries *Subgrants*	Partly Achieved

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

MLC Goal / Program	Measuring Success Focal Area
Goal 1. Building Library Capacity	*Institutional Capacity*
• Consulting	• Improve library operations
• Continuing education	• Improve the library workforce
• Network development	• Improve the library's physical and technological infrastructure
Goal 2. Serving All	*Lifelong Learning, Information Access and Civic Engagement*
• Reading programs	• Improve users' formal education • Improve users' general knowledge and skills • Improve users' ability to participate in their community
• Shared resources	• Improve users' ability to discover information • Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources

• Reading program for visually and physically handicapped learners	• Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
Goal 2. Empowered Libraries	*Lifelong Learning, Information Access, Institutional Capacity and Civic Engagement*
Subgrants	• Various

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

Yes, MLC focused on the library workforce, expending roughly 15% of LSTA funds on a combination of consulting, continuing education and subgrants related to professional development.

Process Evaluation

1. How have you used data from the old and new State Program Report (SPR) and elsewhere to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan?

While MLC does not specifically use SPR reports in its planning and decision-making, it does use the data used to create those reports and has demonstrated that it uses data to guide its activities and to adapt to changes.

2. Specify any changes you made to the Five-Year Plan, and why this occurred.

The Commission has made no interim changes to its Five-Year Plan.

3. How and with whom have you shared data from the old and new SPR and from other evaluation resources?

MLC relies on its annual reports to inform internal discussions and to share summary information with its Board of Commissioners. Those annual reports are based upon the same data entered into the SPR.

Methodology

The Commission engaged with the author of this report in September 2016 to conduct the evaluation outlined by IMLS Guidelines for Five-Year Evaluation. The evaluator reviewed the SPR and annual reports, met with Commission staff and led a series of focus groups to gather input from the library community. The evaluator also administered a brief survey to gather input into the outcomes set in the five-year plan. After delivery of the final report, the evaluator will make himself available to MLC's leadership team and commissioners to address questions and explore potential follow-up to the report.

Recommendations from the 2012-2016 Evaluation

There were eight recommendations in the prior five-year plan evaluation. They are shown below along with an assessment of progress based upon findings from the current evaluation. In short, the Commission evidently responded to the prior evaluation by making needed changes.

1. Continue to support continuing education programs such as Librarianship 101, the Directors Symposium and the Public Librarian Scholarship subgrants. **ACHIEVED**

2. Continue to support resource sharing efforts such as the virtual union catalog, interlibrary loan and databases. Expand the virtual catalog to include the community colleges. **PARTIALLY ACHIEVED**

3. Continue to offer consulting, continuing education and subgrants. **ACHIEVED**

4. Continue to offer reading programs and expand promotion and training related to the Talking Books service. **PARTIALLY ACHIEVED**

5. Strengthen staffing and research to support the network development program. **PARTIALLY ACHIEVED**

6. Strengthen evaluation by viewing evaluation as an ongoing process, improving the outputs and outcomes used in the plan and through continuing education for Mississippi librarians on outcome-based evaluation. **PARTIALLY ACHIEVED**

7. Consider additional subgrant areas: eBooks and collection development. **ACHIEVED**

8. Improve support for the subgrants program. **ACHIEVED**

Additional Conclusions

1. Increase efforts to measure outputs and outcomes and to use those measures to inform ongoing efforts. This may include staff development for both MLC staff and Mississippi library staff on general statistics, survey analysis and outcomes. This should also include a regular program to gather input that may be done with annual surveys, focus groups or some other means.

2. Increase efforts to promote awareness of MLC programs and services to the library community including a better understanding of related staff roles and responsibilities.

3. Continue to offer the consulting, continuing education and network development programs. These are critical areas of support for Mississippi libraries. In addition, continue to adapt to

changing needs and technologies in the delivery of these programs as the Commission has done during this plan.

4. Continue to develop and promote self-service tools such as the director's guide, policy development guide and trustees' handbook. If the Commission is forced to reduce services due to funding cuts, low-cost, self-service tools may help mitigate the reductions.

5. Reconsider the outputs and outcomes for the network development program. It is unclear whether these are the right measures for this program.

6. Continue to invest in resource sharing efforts that cost-effectively serve the needs of Mississippi residents. Create more engagement with Mississippi libraries to help identify the needs and opportunities for resource sharing that are most critical.

7. Reduce the complexity in the Serving All goal area to improve understanding. This could be accomplished by using a structure of sub-goals to better delineate the various components of each current program. Increase promotion and understanding for these programs in the next five-year plan.

8. Continue to provide subgrants to libraries along with the current support structure as funding allows.

Retrospective Evaluation

1. To what extent did your Five-Year Plan activities make progress towards each goal?

Goal 1 – Building Library Capacity

In its first goal, the Commission "strengthens and enhances the capacity of libraries as community anchors to support learning, civic engagement, cultural opportunities and economic vitality" through the following programs.

Programs	Outputs	Outcomes
Consulting	• Number of onsite consulting visits • Number of help desk tickets resolved • Number of consulting hours • Survey results	• Increased knowledge
Continuing Education	• Number of training sessions held • Number of participants • Survey results and other assessments (pre/post/annual)	• Improved skills (public library staff and trustees)
Network Development	• Number of emails sent/received • Number of hosted websites • Number of security risks (SPAM, viruses, etc.) mitigated • Survey results	• Increased network efficiency and access to resources/services via network resources

Status	Description
Partly Achieved	The Commission demonstrated significant progress toward its first goal – Building Library Capacity. In annual reports and SPR reports, the Commission presented evidence on nearly all outputs, and focus groups participants provided direct evidence of most outcomes. The Commission also presented additional evidence not originally included in the established outputs and outcomes. Given the missing data – surveys for consulting and network development and outcomes for network development – and anecdotal feedback provided in focus groups, this goal is deemed to be partly achieved.

Consulting

MLC spent $212,051 on the consulting program as reported in the SPR for years 2013, 2014 and 2015. Commission staff and external contractors provide direct guidance to Mississippi library staff, trustees and friends in the following areas:

- Collection management

- E-Rate
- Facilities and space planning
- General administration
- Grants
- Human resources
- Marketing
- Programs
- Technology

	Prior Year	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Site Visits	100	94	108	59	83
Number of help desk tickets resolved	606	498	1105	1273	1186
Consulting Hours	1,488	2,777	2,112	1,417	2,296

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 97% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 86% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Continuing Education

MLC spent $319,642 on the continuing education program as reported in the SPR for years 2013, 2014 and 2015. Commission staff and external contractors provide continuing education workshops to Mississippi library staff, trustees and friends on the same areas listed under Consulting.

	Prior Year	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Number of Programs	64	38	30	25	28
Number of Attendees	1,195	760	929	762	658
Satisfaction	4.4-5/5	4.8/5	4.8/5	4.8/5	4.5/5

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 97% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 94% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Network Development

MLC spent $412,702 on the network development program as reported in the SPR for years 2013, 2014 and 2015. Commission staff provide network and technology support to Mississippi libraries including:
- Assistance with network telecommunications
- Advice on equipment and network configurations
- Website and email hosting

- Assistance with E-rate applications
- General technology questions and support

	Prior Year	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Emails delivered daily average	65,200	22,635	5,668	33,559	55,088
Websites hosted	29	28	29	32	34
Spam blocked	763,000	859,046	290,355	640,573	2,187,934
Viruses blocked	1,300	396	93	82	17,680

In addition, the Commission notes the following accomplishments that directly relate to the outcomes set in the five-year plan:
- Increased the statewide internet backbone from 500 MB to 2 GB to allow faster downloads and improved network reliability
- Upgraded the help desk ticket system to make it easier to submit and resolve tickets and to improve reporting capabilities to track recurring issues
- Replaced the spam relay server to increase the speed, capacity and security
- Replaced the mobile technology lab used by library systems for training purposes
- Initiated a multi-year plan to migrate email to the Office 365 cloud platform
- Upgraded the VPN concentrator to increase the efficiency of connectivity to the state resources
- Implemented nationally recognized remote desktop assistance software

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 86% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 94% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Feedback from the Library Community

In the focus groups conducted as part of this evaluation, all three programs in this goal area were among the most important programs to the participants offered by the Commission. Many participants, especially newer directors, stressed the importance of consulting and continuing education. It was not surprising to hear Librarianship 101, Directors Symposia and conference scholarships among important events as they were also mentioned in the previous LSTA Five-Year Plan evaluation.

Many participants freely offered constructive criticism and suggestions to improve all three program areas. At the same time, many also praised the Commission for changes made to the program. This suggests that MLC regularly adapts its programs – both proactively and responsively.

MLC has recently undergone a reorganization and major staffing changes in this goal area. Library staff reported a lack of understanding of roles and responsibilities at the Commission and the need for MLC to conduct more outreach. This is not surprising, and anecdotal feedback from Commission staff and focus group participants suggests that the situation is resolving.

Additional Conclusions

- Continue to offer the consulting, continuing education and network development programs. These are critical areas of support for Mississippi libraries. In addition, continue to adapt to changing needs and technologies in the delivery of these programs as the Commission has done during this plan.

- Continue to develop and promote self-service tools such as the director's guide, policy development guide and trustees' handbook. If the Commission is forced to reduce services due to funding cuts, low-cost, self-service tools may help mitigate the reductions.

- Reconsider the outputs and outcomes for the network development program. It is unclear whether these are the right measures for this program.

Goal 2 – Serving All

In its second goal, the Commission "supports the equitable delivery of accessible, high quality library resources, information and services to meet the needs and expectations of learners" through the following programs.

Program	Outputs	Outcomes
Reading Programs	• Number of programs held • Number of participants • Survey results	• Increased ability to engage in reading programs that support learning through reading
Shared Resource Access Programs	• Satisfaction survey results • Number of resources shared	• Learners are satisfied with resources available
Talking Books	• Number of new learners • Survey results • Participation	• Improved satisfaction by learners and partners • Increased opportunities for learners

Status	Description
Partly Achieved	The Commission demonstrated significant progress toward its second goal – Serving All. In annual reports and SPR reports, the Commission presented evidence on nearly all outputs. Outcomes were measured in the survey administered by the evaluator and by some anecdotal feedback for Talking Books. Focus group results in this area were mixed. Given the missing data on outcomes and mixed feedback from focus groups, this goal is deemed to be partly achieved.

Reading Programs

MLC spent $95,240 on reading programs as reported in the SPR for years 2013, 2014 and 2015. The Commission supports related activities from the Center for the Book and the Summer Library Program in this program area.

Mississippi Center for the Book
The Mississippi Center for the Book is the state affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book program. The center promotes books, reading, literacy and libraries. Through the Center for the Book, MLC launched the Mississippi Reads statewide read and the Mississippi Book Festival in 2015 in addition to the activities shown below.

	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Letters about Literature submissions	127	550	600	435
Book Club in a Box kits circulated	20	35	45	34

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 73% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 100% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Summer Library Program
The Commission supports statewide summer library program efforts for (1) early literacy, (2) children, (3) teens and (4) adults. MLC provides consulting, continuing education and materials from the Collaborative Summer Library Program to support this program. Some libraries receive additional funding via competitive LSTA subgrants.

	Prior Year	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Number of Programs	3,420	3,024	3,663	3,502	3,892
Number of Attendees	127,020	136,383	125,880	155,536	172,917
Satisfaction with Materials	4.3/5	4.5/5	4.5/5	4.1/5	4.3/5

Between 2012 and 2016, the Commission noted a 36% increase in participation in related library programs. This directly relates to the outcome: *increased ability to engage in reading programs that support learning through reading.*

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 97% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 94% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Shared Resources

MLC spent $2,274,348 on the shared resource program as reported in the SPR for years 2013, 2014 and 2015. The shared resources program includes a wide variety of activities designed to increase access to information for all Mississippi residents including databases, interlibrary loan and access to special collections at the Commission.

Databases
MLC uses LSTA funds to cover Learning Express and a suite of subscription databases that are available to MLC patrons.

	Prior Year	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Learning Express					
• **Sessions**	31,611	28,708	31,912	33,963	30,452
• **Tests**	25,857	28,168	26,882	20,775	17,900
• **Courses**	8,986	7,462	5,526	10,720	9,510
• **eBooks**	7,288	6,632	6,682	5,890	5,507
• **New Users**	6,468	5,904	6,582	6,666	5,399
MLC Subscription Databases	78,080	55,584	60,994	59,869	74,156

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 91% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 94% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Interlibrary Loan
49 library systems, 2 community colleges and MLC participate in the virtual union catalog to facilitate in-state resource sharing.

	Prior Year	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
Virtual Union Catalog Requests Filled	13,038	21,022	10,747	17,495	17,046
OCLC Requests Filled	11,148	8,598	8,925	8,475	7,043
Total Requests Filled	24,186	29,620	19,672	25,970	24,107

In a 2015 survey conducted by the Commission, 100% of respondents rated satisfaction as good or excellent.

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 97% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 94% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Special Collections
MLC maintains collections centrally that are available to all libraries via interlibrary loan. These include additional copies of high demand titles, government publications and more.

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 43% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 100% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Talking Book Services

MLC spent $409,136 on the talking books program as reported in the SPR for years 2013, 2014 and 2015. This service is an affiliate of the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped at the Library of Congress and provides access to braille, large print, audiobooks and descriptive video collections as well as technology, consulting and training.

	Prior Year	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016
New Patrons	384	401	333	444	349
Active Patrons	2,794	2,293	2212	2423	2,368
Item Use	177,896	144,910	141,278	142,101	151,311
Satisfaction "good to excellent"	98%	98%	98%	96%	98%

Anecdotal evidence from service users suggests that the program is achieving its outcomes:
- *"I haven't been able to read very well for many years, until I was told about your service from a friend. What a lifesaver!"*
- *"As a person with low vision, I am grateful to reading material that I would not have without this service. Thank you!"*

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 90% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 97% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Feedback from the Library Community

This is a complex suite of services, and library feedback varied considerably depending on the service in question. Summer Library Program, Interlibrary Loan and Talking Books are the three aspects of this goal that were most important to focus group participants. While feedback was mixed, it was clear that libraries rely on these services, especially smaller libraries and libraries with newer directors.

Less important to focus group attendees are the Center for the Book, Databases and Special Collections. Here, particularly, it is important to note that state library funding was a charged issue

at the time of the focus groups. Some attendees clearly sought ways to recover funding for cuts made in other areas, and most attendees cited the lack of context of relative costs and use to ascribe value and importance to services.

Additional Conclusions

- Continue to invest in resource sharing efforts that cost-effectively serve the needs of Mississippi residents. Create more engagement with Mississippi libraries to help identify the needs and opportunities for resource sharing that are most critical.

- Reduce the complexity in the Serving All goal area to improve understanding. This could be accomplished by using a structure of sub-goals to better delineate the various components of each current program. Increase promotion and understanding for these programs in the next five-year plan.

Goal 3 – Empowered Libraries

In its third and final goal, the Commission "encourages libraries and library partners to creatively and strategically strengthen/expand library management practices and services and to explore new opportunities for new collaborations and efficiencies" through the following programs.

Program	Outputs	Outcomes
Competitive Sub-grants	• *Various*	• *Various*
Noncompetitive Sub-grants	• *Various*	• *Various*
Cooperative Agreements	• *Various*	• *Various*
Support • Training on laws, regulations, etc. • Help for sub-grantees • Assessment • Outreach and communications related to LSTA plan	• Survey results from training • Project and report documentation • Number of corrections in agency business system	• Increased knowledge of laws and regulations • Improved skill in developing and reporting results • Increased ability to manage grants and projects • Improved ability to correlate measures to services

Status	Description

Partly Achieved	The Commission demonstrated significant progress toward its third goal – Empowered Libraries. In annual reports, SPR reports and meetings with staff, MLC presented evidence on outputs. There is no evidence of the outcomes. Focus group results fill in many gaps suggesting that training efforts are leading to the desired outcomes. This goal is deemed partly achieved due to some gaps in reporting both outputs and outcomes.

Subgrants

In 2013, 2014 and 2015, Mississippi Library Commission funded 50 competitive subgrants for 24 library systems for a total of $538,977. The majority of grants related to expanding access to information using funds for a combination of technology enhancements and additions to library print and online collections. Additionally, the Commission spent $1,056,104 on noncompetitive subgrants to fund collections, technology, conference scholarships, interlibrary loan and other basic library services. The Commission did not fund any cooperative agreements.

In support of the subgrants, MLC staff provides assistance during all phases of the grant process from idea generation to reporting by grant awardees. This includes both consultative one-on-one assistance and continuing education workshops on grants that advise grant applicants about the process, related laws/regulations/policies and about outputs/outcomes.

Among recent improvements made to this service include:

- Increased collaboration between MLC grants staff and consultants
- Improved continuing education offerings related to grants
- Use of a paid external grant reviewer to remove bias and increase constructive feedback for applicants

Training Feedback

	FY 2014	FY 2016	FY 2017
"Session was excellent"	95%	88%	85%
"Addressed my needs"	95%	84%	79%

In the survey administered by the evaluator:
- 100% of respondents agreed or partially agreed that this program achieved its outcome.
- 91% of respondents agreed that the program has maintained or improved since 2013.

Feedback from the Library Community

Subgrants was the most popular program offered by the Commission. Participants appreciate the mix of competitive and noncompetitive subgrants and were generally positive about recent changes

at MLC in support of the program. The noncompetitive grants provide the opportunity for newer staff members to gain exposure to the grants process and increase their ability to apply for more complex grants.

Additional Conclusions

- Continue to provide subgrants to libraries along with the current support structure as funding allows.

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

Mississippi Library Commission efforts relate to four Measuring Success Focal Areas: (1) lifelong learning, (2) information access, (3) institutional capacity and (4) civic engagement as show below mapped to the goals in its five-year plan.

MLC Goal / Program	Measuring Success Focal Area
Goal 1. Building Library Capacity	**Institutional Capacity**
• Consulting	• Improve library operations
• Continuing education	• Improve the library workforce
• Network development	• Improve the library's physical and technological infrastructure
Goal 2. Serving All	**Lifelong Learning, Information Access and Civic Engagement**
• Reading programs	• Improve users' formal education • Improve users' general knowledge and skills • Improve users' ability to participate in their community
• Shared resources	• Improve users' ability to discover information • Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
• Reading program for visually and physically handicapped learners	• Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
Goal 2. Empowered Libraries	**Lifelong Learning, Information Access, Institutional Capacity and Civic Engagement**
Subgrants	• Various

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

   a. Library workforce (current and future)
   b. Individuals living below the poverty line
   c. Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed
   d. Ethnic or minority populations
   e. Immigrants/refugees
   f. Individuals with disabilities
   g. Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills
   h. Families
   i. Children (0-5)
   j. School-aged youth (6-17)

Yes, the Commission placed emphasis (an average of 15% of LSTA funds) on the <u>library workforce</u> through:

   - Continuing Education
   - Consulting
   - Subgrants for professional development and the state association conference

Process Evaluation

1. How have you used data from the old and new State Program Report (SPR) and elsewhere to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan?

It is evident that the Commission's decisions are data-driven. While the Commission does not expressly use SPR reports to guide its decisions; the Commission does use the data that was used to create those reports to inform internal and external planning and decision-making. The separately-prepared annual reports provide the data in form that is clear and actionable.

2. Specify any changes you made to the Five-Year Plan, and why this occurred.

The Commission has made no interim changes to its Five-Year Plan.

3. How and with whom have you shared data from the old and new SPR and from other evaluation resources?

MLC uses the same data sources to generate both annual reports and the SPR entries. MLC does not share SPR reports internally or externally except in its monitoring of subgrants. MLC instead relies on its annual reports to inform internal discussions and to share summary information with its Board of Commissioners.

Methodology

1. Identify how you implemented an independent Five-Year Evaluation using the criteria described in the section of this guidance document call Selection of Evaluators.

MLC launched an RFP in July 2016 seeking to engage the services of an independent evaluator. The RFP outlined the requirements of the evaluation and the structure of the final report. The Commission failed to receive any responses to its RFP due to its timing, so it then reached out to contractors with whom MLC has a prior relationship. The Commission shared the same RFP with potential contractors and ultimately contracted with the author of this report in September 2016.

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

Simple counts and means were used with quantitative data from the survey, annual reports and the SPR, and qualitative analysis was applied to the focus groups. All documents reviewed are valid and reliable. Focus group participation was low; however, the results are valid. The evaluator conducted four focus groups with Mississippi library staff – mostly directors. The evaluator also conducted a survey. There was considerable agreement among the topics and sentiments expressed by the focus groups and the survey; however, there were variations and the perspectives were limited almost entirely to library directors. It has been recommended to the Commission to further engage with the library community to test the conclusions of the focus groups. Given the current charged climate, this must be done delicately to ensure that conversations are productive and useful.

3. Describe the stakeholders involved in the various stages of the Five-Year Evaluation and how you engaged them.

The evaluator traveled to Mississippi for one week. He met with Commission staff for one day and conducted four focus groups during the remaining days of the week. The focus groups were primarily attended by library directors.

4. Discuss how you will share the key findings and recommendations with others.

The evaluator will share this report with MLC's leadership team and will make himself available for follow-up conversations with the leadership team and with MLC's commissioners. The Commission will post this report on its website and will discuss with staff, commissioners and library directors.

Appendix A. List of Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
MS	Mississippi
MLC	Mississippi Library Commission
ILL	Interlibrary loan
SPR	State Program Report – old and new
VUC	Virtual union catalog "Beehive"

Appendix B. List of People Interviewed

Meetings with Commission Staff – Jackson, MS

Name	Title
Ally Mellon	Information Services Director
Ally Watkins	Library Consultant
David Collins	Grant Program Director
Eahmon Jamison	Technology Services
James Dunaway	Technology Services Consultant
Jennifer Peacock	Administrative Services Bureau Director
Joy Garretson	Library Development Director
Lacy Ellinwood	Senior Library Consultant
Shellie Ziegler	Talking Books Services Director
Susan Cassagne	Executive Director
Tracy Carr	Library Services Bureau Director
Vivian Sanderford	Senior Network Specialist

Focus Group: Dixie Regional Library System – Pontotoc, MS

Name	Title	Organization
Amanda Knecht	Director	Marshall County Library System
Emily Sutherland	Assistant Director	Dixie Regional Library System
Jeff Tomlinson	Director	Lee-Itawamba Library System
Jennifer Wann	Director	Bolivar County Library System
Lin Joiner	Technology Coordinator	Dixie Regional Library System
Regina Graham	Director	Dixie Regional Library System
Sarah Crisler-Ruskey	Director	Carnegie Public Library

Focus Group: Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System, Kosciusko MS

Name	Title	Organization
Richard Greene	Director	Mid-Mississippi Regional Library System
Jenniffer Stephenson	Director	Greenwood-Leflore Public Library System

Meredith Wickham	Director	Kemper-Newton Regional Library System

Focus Group: Library of Hattiesburg, Petal & Forrest County – Hattiesburg, MS

Name	Title	Organization
Carolyn Russell	Assistant Director	Laurel-Jones County Library
James Pinkard	Director	Covington County Library System
Jean Damiano	Branch Manager	Jackson-George Regional Library System
Joshua Haidet	Director	East Mississippi Regional Library System
Leanna Hamburg	Branch Manager	Jackson-George Regional Library System
Mary Louise Breland	Director	Laurel-Jones County Library
Phillip Carter	Director	Lamar County Library System
Sean Farrell	Director	Library of Hattiesburg, Petal & Forrest County
Adam Singletary	Associate Director	Library of Hattiesburg, Petal & Forrest County

Focus Group: Warren County-Vicksburg Public Library – Vicksburg MS

Name	Title	Organization
Ed Hughes	Director	First Regional Library
Katrina Stokes	Director	Warren County-Vicksburg Public Library
Kay Clanton	Director	Washington County Library System

Appendix C. Bibliography of Documents Reviewed

1. Mississippi Library Commission Library Services and Technology Act Five Year Plan, Federal Years 2013-2017
2. IMLS State Program Report, 2013
3. IMLS Grants to States Program Report, 2014
4. IMLS Grants to States Program Report, 2015
5. List of library programs mapped to IMLS focal areas and state legislative mandates
6. MLC organizational chart, FY 2017
7. Library Services Bureau Annual Report, FY 2013
8. Library Services Bureau Annual Report, FY 2014
9. Library Services Bureau Annual Report, FY 2015
10. Library Services Bureau Annual Report, FY 2016
11. Development Services Bureau Annual Report, FY 2012
12. Development Services Bureau Annual Report, FY 2013
13. MLC Subscription Database Statistics, FY 2012
14. MLC Subscription Database Statistics, FY 2013
15. MLC Subscription Database Statistics, FY 2014
16. MLC Subscription Database Statistics, FY 2015
17. MLC Subscription Database Statistics, FY 2016
18. Summer Library Program Statistics, FY 2012-16
19. LSTA Subgrant Application and Instructions, Competitive, FY 2017
20. LSTA Subgrant Application and Instructions, Non-Competitive, FY 2017
21. LSTA Manual (general information, program requirements, laws)

Appendix D. Focus Group Discussion Guide

This handout was distributed to focus group participants to guide the discussions.

Discussion Guide

The purpose of this focus group is to gather input from the library community on the implementation of Mississippi Library Commission's Five-Year LSTA Plan. Please refer to the plan and LSTA priorities listed on the next page.

1. **Which LSTA program brings the greatest value to your library or community? How so?**

2. **How have MLC's LSTA programs successfully impacted your libraries and your communities?**

Building Library Capacity	Serving All	Empowered Libraries

3. **How can MLC improve its LSTA programs to better serve your libraries and your communities?**

Building Library Capacity	Serving All	Empowered Libraries

4. **What priorities should be the focus of MLC's next LSTA plan?**

MLC's LSTA Plan in a Nutshell

These are the goals along with a general sense of the activities in MLS' current Five-Year Plan.

Building Library Capacity	Serving All	Empowered Libraries
• Consulting • Continuing Education • Technology	• Summer Library Program • Center for the Book • Book Kits • Resource Sharing • Databases • Accessibility • Interlibrary Loan • Talking Books	• Grants

Appendix E. Focus Group Results

Introduction

Mississippi Library Commission is currently evaluating its Five-Year LSTA Plan. This evaluation is required of all state library agencies every five years. The Commission engaged with the author of this report to conduct the evaluation which includes gathering input from the library community and reviewing reports and other documentation in the light of the Commission's Five-Year Plan and the evaluation strategies that it set forth in that plan. Interested readers can learn more about the Grants to States program along with copies of the state's plan and prior evaluation report at the Institute of Museum and Library services at:
https://www.imls.gov/grants/grants-states

In total, 22 staff members from 17 libraries attended one of four focus groups convened by the Commission during the week of December 12, 2016, at Pontotoc, Kosciusko, Hattiesburg and Vicksburg. This interim report is a summary of those focus group meetings. It will inform both the evaluation of the current plan and the development of the next plan.

Focus Group Summary

The following items represent the major topics of conversation at the four focus groups convened by the Mississippi Library Commission to gather feedback on its Five-Year LSTA Plan. The summary below is written in hopes to facilitate meaningful responses, dialog and action. Major discussion items with important feedback and considerations are numbered for easy reference; while, other items appear bulleted at the end of each section.

It is important to note that attendance at the focus groups was low—only 22 staff members from 17 library systems. Therefore, it would be unwise to act on the suggestions contained herein without additional inquiry and validation.

Note: Some statements may appear to be contradictory. Those statements are not errors, but rather an indication of the variety of opinions represented.

At-a-Glance

The following chart generalizes the relative awareness, importance and satisfaction of the various LSTA-funded programs at the Commission. These sentiments are inferred from the comments made by the participants in the focus groups and presented here to underscore highlights and lowlights.

	Awareness	Importance	Satisfaction
Center for the Book	Low	Low	-
Consulting and Continuing Education	High	High	Moderate
Databases	Moderate	Low	Low
Interlibrary Loan	High	Moderate	Moderate

Network Development	High	High	Moderate
Subgrants to Libraries	High	High	High
Summer Library Program	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Talking Books	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
Overall	**Moderate**	**Moderate**	**Moderate**

General

1. There were many interrelated items that fall under the headings of "communications" and "transparency." Generally, the library community expressed genuine support of the Mississippi Library Commission. However, it was felt that the Commission can do more to build the trust that is necessary to harness the power of its community. Specific suggestions include:

   a. Share easily digestible information that highlights Commission spending alongside relevant usage data by program area. In these challenging economic times, it is not surprising that participants were both more interested and sensitive to these costs. During the focus groups, participants expressed difficulty evaluating the services given lack of information on expenditures. (This lack of understanding is undoubtedly reflected in some of the comments and suggestions below.)

   b. Explore ways to engage library directors in important decisions. This has the double benefit of bringing relevant information from the field into the decision-making process and increasing buy-in. This may be accomplished in several ways including existing directors meetings, surveys, advisory committees, etc.

2. Recent staffing changes have resulted in some missed connections and confusion about whom to call for a variety of issues. A measure of this is normal during staffing transitions. However, it is important to reinforce official communications channels and consultant relationships while the library community adapts.

   a. Place increased emphasis on outreach from all Commission staff members to ensure that the Commission is both responsive and proactive to the needs of the Mississippi's libraries. Consider a telephone directory organized by topic or department to help libraries to find the right contact for a given issue.

3. Participants shared four program areas that are critical to them: subgrants to libraries, continuing education, consulting and network development.

   a. Continue to invest in efforts to ensure that these programs remain strong and are responsive and adaptive to library needs.

4. Participants in the focus groups provided the following advice to the Commission as it considers potential future programs and activities for the next LSTA plan:

a. Focus on fewer programs. Participants perceive that the Commission is stretched too thinly to deliver on its ambitious goals.

b. Use data to drive decision-making—library usage data as well as data from external sources. Share this data with libraries and help them to make sense of it for statewide, regional and local planning efforts.

c. Continue to provide continuing education, consulting and competitive grants to help libraries to prepare for the future and to explore fresh new ideas.

d. Help interested libraries to increase collaboration to improve service to Mississippi residents and to reduce costs. Potential areas for collaboration might span simple efforts to share costs for library programs to complex explorations to consolidate systems.

e. Help demonstrate the value of Mississippi libraries. This could take the form of centralized advertising or public service announcements as well as consulting and continuing education to help libraries locally to communicate their benefits.

Center for the Book

The Center for the Book comprises several Commission services designed to promote reading and literacy. They include the Mississippi Book Festival, Mississippi Reads and special extended loan collections that libraries can borrow to support book clubs and other activities. Participants in the focus groups were generally unaware of and skeptical of the usefulness of the Center for the Book activities. Given participant feedback and the current economy, it may be worth reconsidering elements of this service.

General Considerations
5. Increase promotion of the Center for the Book activities and relative costs.

6. Explore ways to better engage Mississippi libraries in the selection of books for community reads and book lists. There was some negative feedback on the Commission's choices and a general lack of awareness on the process for making book selections.

Specific Items
- Some participants suggested that it is easier today for libraries to obtain copies of books needed for book clubs and that the Commission might instead focus its efforts on creating discussion guides.

- A couple participants suggested that there may have been a heavy focus on controversial titles for the young adult reading list.

- Participants were generally skeptical, with some exceptions, on the usefulness of the kits, especially those with non-book items (e.g. board games).

Consulting and Continuing Education

Consulting and continuing education includes a wide variety of specialized services to libraries including advisory services to library directors, regular meetings among library directors and continuing education for all library staff members. Participants in focus groups named these programs among the most critical services provided to libraries. Given that high interest, it should not be surprising that the participants also had a great many suggestions to tailor the services to their needs.

General Considerations

7. Explore opportunities to connect library directors with one another to build community and to share knowledge. Participants saw a role for the consultants to bring this about for all library staff and especially among library directors. Specific suggestions included:
    a. Regional consultant assignments and directors meetings (in additional to statewide meetings)
    b. More time for networking/sharing at directors meetings

8. Complete development and increase promotion of the library directors guide. Many participants relayed that the guide was a very useful tool.

9. Continue efforts to make webinars a major component of continuing education offerings. Participants greatly appreciated the webinars and specifically mentioned (1) savings—time and money—on travel and (2) flexibility to watch recorded webinars when most convenient. Participants did suggest that the Commission offer shorter webinars when the topic allows and/or split long recordings into shorts so that participants can focus on the item of most immediate need. Finally, participants recognized that webinars are by design less interactive and suggested that the Commission explore ways to increase engagement in this format.

10. Continue to offer continuing education opportunities in a variety of formats. Overall, participants appreciate the variety of formats including central and regional live workshops, live and recorded webinars, and on-demand staff development workshops.

11. Explore potential enhancements to the Librarianship 101 workshop. This topic was discussed at all workshops and is among one of the most critical activities of the Commission. Suggestions included:
    a. Refine curriculum to ensure that the topics covered meet the needs of Mississippi libraries.
    b. Build in recognition for program progress/completion (e.g. badging).
    c. Consider alternate formats such as a series of standalone workshops or webinars.

12. Explore ways to share information about staff trainings with library directors. The directors want to know (1) what staff have learned and (2) the quality of the training so they can manage expectations of staff performance.

Specific Items

- Participants expressed disappointment at the rescheduled directors symposium.

- Participants expressed frustration with the recent purchasing card situation.

- The following topics were suggested for continuing education workshops:
  - Future readiness, fresh ideas
  - Generational differences
  - Grant and foundation funding sources
  - Grant writing

- Some participants suggested a virtual option for attending directors meetings.

- The following topics were suggested for consulting services:
  - Legal advice
  - Marketing, outreach and promotion

- Some participants expressed a need for guidance on how to encourage/compel staff members to attend needed training sessions.

- Among ideas for exploring trade-offs in continuing education, participants suggested that on demand staff development days delivered by MLC staff should be open to all staff from any Mississippi library.

Databases

The databases funded by LSTA include Learn-A-Test as well as a number of databases that are available on-site at the Commission and remotely to interested librarians. In general participants lacked awareness of what was available and were skeptical of the usefulness of these resources. Given participant feedback and the current economy, the Commission should carefully study the costs and benefits of this service.

General Considerations
13. Reexamine the relative costs and benefits of the databases available to MLC library users. Participants, with some vocal exceptions, were skeptical of their value.

Specific Items
- Participants cited the need to increase promotion for all databases – LSTA and state-funded.

- Participants praised the eBook pilot.

- Participants expressed concerns about the lack of awareness/adoption by schools and suggested that the Commission take appropriate steps.

Interlibrary Loan

Interlibrary loan comprises the statewide virtual catalog as well as lending and borrowing via OCLC funded by the Commission. With some notable exceptions, many participants placed interlibrary loan among important service areas. Interlibrary loan is an equalizer, so it was not surprising that smaller libraries (collection space) and poorer libraries rated the importance of this service highly.

General Considerations

14. Continue to explore innovative interlibrary loan solutions that reduce costs and/or enhance service to Mississippi library users. Participants appreciated the recent ILL pilot project.

15. Continue to offer the interlibrary loan incentive subgrants. (See the comments on the noncompetitive subgrants below for more on this item.)

Specific Items

- There was some confusion among participants when to use virtual catalog vs. OCLC for borrowing.

Network Development

MLC provides a suite of technology and network services to libraries. These services include assisting libraries to use the state contract for Internet connectivity, providing remote and on-site advice on related hardware/software, providing email accounts, providing library websites and assisting libraries with eRate applications. Feedback on network was very complex as it involved a number of related themes including staffing changes at the Commission and the state contract for Internet services.

General Considerations

16. Deploy Office 365. Participants who were among pilot libraries expressed a high degree of satisfaction. There was confusion among the remaining participants including:
    a. Is the deployment of Office 365 continuing?
    b. Can a library use "part" of Office 365 without replacing its local system (e.g. Google Apps)?

17. Explore remote support options. Participants suggested that the Commission may wish to use remote support tools such as GoToAssist or TeamViewer to remotely troubleshoot and solve problems.

18. Explore proactive support options. Participants suggested that the commission explore allocating staff to visit libraries regularly and to identify needed network improvements.

Specific Items

- Overall, participants are dissatisfied with the provider of Internet services on state contract. They mentioned (1) costs and (2) the duration of the contract and its extension as major areas of frustration. (They are aware that the contract is managed by another state agency.)

- There appears to be some confusion over network filtering and what decisions are under local control.

- Some participants were unaware of the scope of eRate funding.

Subgrants to Libraries

The Commission provides both competitive and noncompetitive subgrants libraries with LSTA funds. During this Five-Year Plan, participants experienced two major changes: (1) a reduction/simplification of subgrant categories and (2) increased complexity in the most recent application process. In this area, participants discussed the entire process from application to reporting. Participants noted subgrants as the single most important program area, providing needed funding and the greatest flexibility to apply funds locally as needed.

General Considerations
19. Continue to offer a mix of noncompetitive and competitive grants. (See the related comments below under "grant reviewer feedback.)

20. Expand grants training to include optional grant writing and seeking workshops. While, participants expressed a natural degree of frustration with the application and the federal reporting requirements; they also assigned high marks in general to the support received from the Commission throughout the grants process including both training workshops and one-on-one support.

21. Share grant reviewer feedback. Participants saw grants, in part, as an educational opportunity both for themselves and for their staffs. Many mentioned a progression, in fact, from noncompetitive grants, to competitive grants, to other external funding sources outside LSTA. Feedback from the reviewer would, in their eyes, help them to be more successful in the future.

22. Share winning competitive grants in full detail – both applications and final reports. This is both a transparency item and an educational item as mentioned in the prior bullet. Participants would like to see examples of winning grants to help them write better grants and to identify fresh ideas that might bring value to their libraries.

23. Offer training that explains inputs, outputs and outcomes. Participants continue to be unclear on the differences and recent training efforts may have been unsuccessful.

Specific Items
- Participants expressed frustration expiring quotes and budget revisions in the grant process. This is particularly relevant in grants that fund technology where equipment and software may become outdated during the application process.

- A handful of participants mentioned a potential inequity issue between the number of allowable grants and the total number of library outlets per system.

Summer Library Program

MLC provides support for summer library program through statewide participation in the Collaborative Summer Library Program and through related consulting and continuing education. Use of the services in this area was mixed as was the degree of importance place on the program. Similar to ILL, importance and usage followed local context. Libraries with limited staff capacity and/or budgets appear to benefit most from this service.

General Considerations

24. Continue to improve the continuing education offerings in this area. Here participants referenced increased satisfaction with recent offerings. Specific suggestions include:
    a. Share successful ideas (and lessons learned from failures) from Mississippi libraries.
    b. Improve craft ideas that scale better to larger libraries and systems.

25. Reexamine involvement in the Collaborative Summer Library Program. Participants in the focus groups lacked awareness of the costs/benefits of participation in CSLP.

Specific Items

- Participants want an easier way to find and share information about performers. They also suggest a way to collaborate on performer contracting to control costs.

- Those participants that appreciate the Collaborative Summer Library Program also appreciated the choice to select catalog items most relevant to their local needs.

Talking Books

Talking Books comprises the suite of services to serve Mississippi residents who are blind or visually impaired or who have other physical or intellectual barriers to using the library. These services include providing braille books and talking books to eligible residents, related training and consulting to libraries and long-term loan collections of large print books to libraries. Most participants placed a high value on this program though it is clear that increased outreach would be beneficial.

General Considerations

26. Expand outreach in this area. Participants were often delighted by the Commission's work in this area with other libraries. Ideas worth sharing include:
    a. Distribute readers (and training) to demonstrate to local users and caregivers. Participants mentioned how this eases potential users fears of the complexity of the devices.
    b. The Commission current download's titles from BARD onto devices. Is it possible for local libraries to do this directly for users and caregivers on site?

27. Expand consulting and training in this area to help libraries to connect with local residents, caregivers and institutions.

Specific Items

- Participants would like more information about who is served by this program.

- Participants suggested an organizational card for assisted living facilities as one way to potentially collaborate with those institutions.

Appendix F: Survey Results

There were 39 responses to the survey from library administrators in Mississippi.

Consulting Services

1. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	36	0
%	100%	0%

2. This service has increased your knowledge, skills and/or abilities.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	25	10	0	1
%	69%	28%	0%	3%

3. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	15	15	5
%	43%	43%	14%

Continuing Education

4. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	32	4
%	89%	11%

5. This service has increased your knowledge, skills and/or abilities.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	28	4	0	1

%	85%	12%	0%	3%

6. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	15	17	2
%	43%	50%	6%

Network Development

7. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	32	4
%	89%	11%

8. This service has increased your library's ability to provide access to online resources for your community.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	23	7	2	3
%	67%	20%	6%	9%

9. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	19	14	2
%	54%	40%	6%

Summer Library Program

10. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No

#	36	0
%	100%	0%

11. This service has helped your library to attract more people to your reading programs and has increased your library's ability to support learning through reading.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	24	11	1	0
%	67%	31%	3%	0%

12. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	17	17	2
%	47%	47%	6%

Center for the Book

13. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	18	18
%	50%	50%

14. This service has helped your library to attract more people to your reading programs and has increased your library's ability to support learning through reading.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	4	15	2	5
%	15%	58%	8%	19%

15. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	11	17	0

%	39%	61%	6%

Databases

16. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	35	1
%	97%	3%

17. Access to these resources increases satisfaction by your library patrons.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	20	12	2	1
%	57%	34%	6%	3%

18. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	9	24	2
%	26%	69%	6%

Interlibrary Loan

19. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	34	2
%	94%	6%

20. Access to these resources increases satisfaction by your library patrons.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	28	6	0	0

%	82%	18%	0%	0%

21. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	19	14	1
%	56%	41%	3%

Special Collections

22. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	28	8
%	78%	22%

23. Access to these resources increases satisfaction by your library patrons.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	8	1	5	7
%	38%	5%	24%	33%

24. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	8	14	0
%	36%	64%	0%

Talking Books

25. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	23	13

	%	64%	36%

26. This service increases learning opportunities for your library patrons.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	22	5	1	2
%	73%	17%	3%	7%

27. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	17	13	1
%	55%	42%	3%

Subgrants

28. Did you use this service between 2013 and 2017?

	Yes	No
#	36	0
%	100%	0%

29. This service expands your library's capacity to serve library patrons.

	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
#	36	0	0	0
%	100%	0%	0%	0%

30. How has this service changed since 2013?

	Better	No change	Worse
#	22	10	3
%	63%	29%	9%

Final Thoughts

31. What one program brings the greatest value to your library? Why?

There were 33 responses to this question.

Tag	Comment
Not LSTA	Personnel Incentive Grant Program because it helps us be able to pay staff where local funding is not sufficient.
Subgrants	LSTA Competitive and Non-Competitive Grants, Learning Express
Subgrants	LSTA Competitive Grant program
Consulting Summer Library Program	Probably consulting services and the Summer Library Program
Subgrants	Subgrants
Subgrants	The grants allow us to provide things that we could otherwise not afford.
Continuing Education	Continuing Ed - because it helps keep director and staff current with library trends, legalities, etc. and is a great inexpensive way to get necessary training for staff
Interlibrary Loan	The OCLC interlibrary loan program.
Interlibrary Loan Subgrants	I"m hard pressed to pick one. Resource Sharing and Competitive and Non-Competitive Grants run neck & neck. Resource Sharing allows us to get materials for patrons, helping to stretch our limited material's budget. Grants because they allow us to make equipment upgrades that might not otherwise be possible.
Subgrants	Non-competitive and competitive grants
Subgrants	Non-competitive grant program provide computers for public access
Subgrants	LSTA sub grants
Subgrants	The non-competitive sub-grants allow us to replace outdated public computers each year. Without it, we could not do so. (For example, FY 17 grants will replace the last of our XP comptuers.)
Subgrants	grants
Summer Library Program	The Summer Reading Program because it provide great ideas for programming.
Not LSTA	PIGP - This program provides us resources that we would otherwise not be able to receive.

Summer Library Program Talking Books	Summer Library Program and Talking books because these services directly affect our patrons when we wouldn't have been able to provide them with these services.
Subgrants	LSTA Grants program
Subgrants	Grants LSTA
Subgrants	Grant funds allow us to be creative, or fill a need.
Subgrants	The LSTA grants. We are able to start new collections/programs with this funding that we otherwise could not fund from our budget.
Subgrants	Grants, it allows us to do unique programming, and brings new ideas to our area.
Summer Library Program	Summer Library Program Training and materials help us in our efforts to encourage children to read during the summer
Subgrants	LSTA Competitive Grants provide funding of innovative sustainable programs.
Continuing Education	Continuing Education opportunities through workshops and webinars.
Network Development	E-rate assistance. Because of the cost savings and expertise.
Subgrants	noncompetitive grant opportunities gives all libraries equal opportunity to provide programs and/or materials for communities, customized to the needs of each community
Continuing Education	Continuing Education -- Most of our staff do not have college education. CE improves the ability of our staff to provide outstanding library services to our community.
Subgrants	LSTA Competitive Grants
Subgrants	LSTA Grants. I have great respect and appreciation for everything that MLC offers, but as a director in a small system, nothing can top having extra funds in the budget. The continuing education program is a close second, however.
Subgrants Network Development	It is a toss up between the grant help, and the network assistance.
Subgrants Consulting	LSTA grants and the consultant services are the most immediate and beneficial value for my library system. I utilize my consultant on an almost weekly basis.
Continuing Education	Some of the workshops have been helpful in improving the way we do things at our library.

32. What one change to MLC's programs and services would bring the greatest value to your library? Why?

There were 25 responses to this question.

Tag	Comment
Funding	Restoration of the Personnel Incentive Grant Program because nothing else matters if our libraries are not able to be open because we can't pay the staff.
Funding	More funding, different deadlines, and more reminders
Subgrants (same)	The continuation of competitive grants
Funding	Stable funding for the Personnel Incentive Grant Program.
Network Development (more)	More IT help. Not sure it's feasible though. We don't have resources we need to manage that as well as we would like.
Subgrants (more)	Increase in number or amount of non competitive grants; These are great for replacing items such a computers, copiers, up-grading the collection, giving us valuable tools to keep afloat; especially for smaller rural libraries that don't have the population or budget to adequately take care of these things.
Continuing Education (grants)	Offer a grant workshop that covers not only the LSTA grants, but other available grants also.
Network Development (increased bandwidth)	I don't know how a change in MLC programs could bring it about, but the item of greatest value to our libraries would be more bandwidth at the same or less cost.
Subgrants (simplify paperwork)	Please continue efforts to simplify paperwork. The scanning of documents takes up more time than actually compiling the paperwork and seems to be a step backwards in streamlining the submission process. Anything that makes the project more time efficient helps us with our work requirements!
Subgrants (more)	More funds for books, computers, and operations
Subgrants (simplify paperwork)	less time spent on paperwork for the sub-grants as it takes away time I could be spent doing other tasks to help the library system
Funding	more funding
	At the moment I cannot think of any change that I would make to any of the programs and I feel as though all the programs bring value to our library and the consultants are always at hand to help when they can.
Consulting (focus on directors)	I think that there needs to be updates and additions to resources for public library systems especially for Directors--e.g. there is a resource guide for directors but it needs to be updated and searchable online.

Subgrants (more)	More grant funds
Funding	I don't feel that there is any one change that MLC needs to make to its programs and services; the problem is the cuts to MLC's funding and to all libraries will severely hamper our ability to provide the services our patrons have come to expect.
Network Development (outreach)	I think there needs to be better communication about some of the services. For instance Helpdesk and helping fix major issues. That could help us save money.
	I do not have a good answer for this in light of all the budget cuts. Everything MLC does has value to my library system. Consulting, Network Services, Talking Books, Summer Library Program ,Magnolia , E-rate consultant and the Beehive are all services that we use.
Continuing Education (technology)	Best practices technology training for director and/or library IT staff. So many of our public library systems do not have an IT specialist on staff, and the director and other library staff do not have specific training for technology needs such as server management, network diagnostics, and other troubleshooting skills.
Funding	Provide more funds via Personnel Incentive Grants to the poorest libraries in the state. Put a floor under libraries that are operating at $9 per capita and less. With the current formula (developed when library budgets were more flush), MLC's help is not distributed in a way to establish equity and parity among Mississippi's residents but disproportionately benefits library residents in more affluent communities and endangers the poorest libraries. Two counties will be without library services as of this spring. I do not want one of the counties my library serves to be next. But we are fighting a much tougher fight than the better funded communities, and MLC simply does not seem to care.
Subgrants	provide more noncompetitive grants for everyone - giving libraries with no grant writing skills the opportunity to provide additional programs and materials for individual community needs
Consulting and Continuing Education (future focus)	Focus more on Library Development activities -- through CE and Consulting our libraries are more able to take risks and experiment with services, keep up with national economic, cultural, and educational trends, and develop our full potential.
Network Development (more support)	Much more tech support
Subgrants (noncompetitive)	Whether even possible or not, the ability to use LSTA funds to assist in funding pre-existing programs would be a great boon to library service. It's difficult coming up with new ideas and programs every year that won't tax my already stretched thin staff.

Continuing Education (more)	I feel there should be more workshops aimed toward improving skills of library directors and staff. There is so much more involved in making a library successful in the community than what is taught in college.

33. Additional comments:

There were 10 responses to this question.

We don't need any programs or services if our libraries are closed because of cuts to PIGP.
I, along with my board, are very I satisfied with the discontinuation of the LSTA grant program.
We appreciate the services and advocacy provided by MLC for Mississippi public libraries. But these are very difficult times for our libraries with shrinking state funding and public libraries facing drastic measures to survive.
I said "worse" for network services, and this is because there have been personnel changes, which has meant they are in transition. Also, it seems ATT always makes it hard to get things done, which is not the fault of MLC, but it adds to the feeling of frustration and desire to seek out other providers and a tension between wanting to stay on state network and wanting to try something, anything besides ATT.
All LSTA services are good, some of them just do not fit into my library's needs list
The MLC does a great job for the library systems in the state. They provide help and materials for everyone. Everything that is offered is needed.
Since we are the library system the farthest distance from MLC, it is impossible for us to afford to send anyone other than the Director and sometimes the Assistant Director to Continuing Education events. We have not been able to send any branch managers to SLP workshops because they are no longer being offered in a reasonable driving distance from us. Many years ago, many SLP and Continuing Education workshops were held occasionally in Tupelo/Lee county or Booneville, which is more convenient for our region.
grant selection is too dependent on current jargon and opinions of the readers - grant money should be allocated equally among all libraries so the funds benefit all libraries, not just a select few who win!
All consultants should be able to help directors with statistical analysis. They should also each have a specialization within IT like web developer, network engineering (even the most basic level would help), system analyst, or accounting. We need this kind of help more that the traditional library help.
Consultants do an admirable job within the limitations of their job description.

34. Optional: Provide your library name so that we can include that in our analysis.

- Benton County – [1]

- Columbus-Lowndes – [1]
- First Regional – [1]
- Greenwood-Leflore – [1]
- Harriette Person – [1]
- Kemper-Newton Regional – [1]
- Lamar County – [1]
- Laurel-Jones – [1]
- Lincoln-Lawrence Franklin Regional – [1]
- Northeast Regional – [1]
- Pike-Amite-Walthall – [1]
- Pine Forest Regional – [1]
- Sunflower County – [1]
- Washington County – [1]
- Waynesboro-Wayne County – [1]
- Wilkinson County – [1]
- Yalobusha County – [1]
- (blank) – [19]