Mississippi Library Commission

Library Services and Technology Act

Five-Year Plan

Federal Years 2023 – 2027

**Prepared for the Institute of Museum and Library Services
June 2022**

The Mississippi Library Commission was established in 1926 by an Act of the Mississippi Legislature with the aim of furthering the development of public libraries throughout the state. The agency was tasked with serving as a source of advice and support for schools and public libraries as well as communities seeking to establish libraries of their own. The Act also authorized the Board of Commissioners to purchase and operate traveling libraries that may circulate to libraries, organizations, or groups, including charitable and penal institutions. Further, the agency was required to obtain annual reports from all libraries in the state and to make a biennial report to the legislature of its work. Today, the Mississippi Library Commission offers a wide variety of direct and indirect services to libraries, government agencies, and all citizens of Mississippi.

Vision

All Mississippians have access to quality library services in order to:

- achieve their greatest potential,
- participate in a global society, and
- enrich their daily lives.

Mission Statement

The Mississippi Library Commission is committed – through leadership, advocacy, and service – to strengthening and enhancing libraries and library services for all Mississippians.

Core Values

We believe that all Mississippians deserve quality library services. We recognize that our staff is the essential asset in delivering services that ensure customer expectations are met or exceeded. We commit to work diligently, to exhibit honorable behavior, to know what is right, and to do it. We believe in being fair, honest, and respectful. We value a workplace distinguished by open, direct, and timely communication. To that end, we pursue new ideas with energy and rely upon the talents, skills, knowledge, and abilities of staff and colleagues to meet the changing needs of the people we serve.

Needs Assessment

The Mississippi Library Commission contracted Dr. Sean M. Owen, an External Evaluator, to prepare an evaluation report of the Agency's 2018-2022 Library Services Technology Act (LSTA) Five Year Plan. In preparation, he reviewed the past years' SPRs and annual reports, met with and interviewed Commission staff, and conducted a series of virtual focus groups with library directors around the state to garner feedback from Mississippi's library community. The evaluator also administered a survey to evaluate the Commission's progress regarding the desired outcomes that were established in the previous five-year plan.

The virtual focus groups allowed MLC to further assess the needs of Mississippi libraries. Library directors were assigned to groups based on the population their libraries serve. These discussions allowed library

leadership to ask questions pertaining to MLC's identified goals and provide input on their specific needs under the LSTA priorities.

Beyond the analysis of the external evaluator, to help determine the goals to target in the 2023-2027 LSTA Five-Year Plan, the Mississippi Library Commission also reviewed and discussed a variety of data sources, including user statistics, anecdotal documentation, and past surveys of programs offered through MLC. To effectively ensure these goals are consistently being met, MLC will administer annual surveys over the next five years to assess the needs of Mississippi libraries and will update the goals as needed in response.

MLC's priority is to continue broadening and improving the channels of communication between the agency and Mississippi libraries as a means to effectively meet libraries' needs over the next five years, which are:

1.   Technology Support Services – In focus groups, Technology Services programs were ranked as some of the more vital services offered by the Mississippi Library Commission. Due to reduced funding for libraries across the state, the systems need for Information Technology increased during the last five years. Many library directors expressed the need for wraparound technology support processes for not only their library system but also the communities related to that library system. MLC staff provides much-needed IT training, consulting, and website/email management and support. The need for these services will continually increase as existing technologies evolve and new technologies arise. MLC will continue to provide advice, research, and support to each public library as needed in any area of technology.

2.   Library Development – MLC offers Mississippi libraries vital Consulting and Continuing Education services on a wide range of subjects designed to address the needs of library employees from directors to front-line staff. These efforts are integral to libraries' success. Increasing the variety of formats for continuing education opportunities, as well as providing different levels or tiers of training for different staff needs, is important for many libraries.

3.   Shared Resources – MLC seeks to provide Mississippi libraries with strong, diverse collections – both physical and virtual – that are available to all Mississippians both inside and outside their local communities. MLC engages in statewide resource sharing in an effort to equalize library services across Mississippi. In addition to offering residents access to resources through databases such as LearningExpress and Beehive Resource Sharing, MLC provides libraries with access to cataloging assistance, professional research staff, and materials in a variety of formats. MLC will continue to develop innovative ways to increase access to information for Mississippi residents.

4.   Serve all Mississippians – As the regional library for Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled program, MLC strives to reach those with difficulty using traditional library services by offering the Talking Books Program. Patrons can utilize this service to access braille, large print books, audiobooks, and descriptive video collections. MLC will continue to identify and serve Mississippians who qualify for this service. MLC will also expand the communication methodology for information pertaining to these services to library systems so that library directors can have a better understanding of the needs of their patrons.

5.   Empower Libraries – Libraries rank subgrants as the most popular program offered by the Mississippi Library Commission. MLC provides the state's libraries with access to state and federal grant opportunities to provide funding for resources to meet the needs of their communities. To support the grant application process, MLC staff provide one-on-one consultation as well as workshops to inform potential applicants about all phases of the grant process.

The Library Commission's primary stakeholders include:

- The directors, staff, and trustees of Mississippi public libraries
- State of Mississippi employees
- People with visual and physical disabilities
- The Mississippi public at large

Goal 1: Enhance the Technological Environment of Mississippi Libraries

MLC seeks to enhance the technological capabilities of Mississippi libraries by offering support and services through a variety of projects and programs designed to address both the internal and external technological needs impacting library operations.

Needs Addressed:

Technology Support Services

LSTA Priorities:

2) Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. § 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services.
4) Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations.
7) Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

Supporting Projects:

In order to accomplish this goal, the following projects will be executed:

1. **Technology Support and Services** - Advice, research, and support will be offered to each public library as needed in any area of technology.

   Activities:

   - Provide Information Technology help desk support.
   - Provide remote and on-site support with Local and Wide Area Networks (LAN and

WAN).
- Create, design, support, and host websites.
- Offer technology procurement support.
- Serve as technology consultants to libraries.
- Serve as liaison to third party technology vendors.
- Provide mobile technology program.
- Keep MLC staff trained in information technology.
- Procure and maintain technology tools and resources at MLC.

2. **Create Partnerships** - Collaborate with the Mississippi Information Technology Services agency to provide enhanced internet access.

   Activities:

   - Offer project management of internet circuit connectivity.
   - Ensure CIPA compliance as required by E-rate.
   - Obtain statewide pricing and options for internet speeds.

3. **E-rate Guidance and Support** - Assistance in preparing and submitting all required forms will be provided so that libraries obtain the most value and understanding of the program.

   Activities:

   - Provide E-rate training on changes, guidelines, and administration of processes.
   - Provide opportunities to complete E-rate applications with individualized support.
   - Serve as liaison between libraries and USAC for program integrity assurance, review, and audits.
   - Provide group communication capabilities (listserv) in order to share deadline reminders, problem solving, and knowledge base.
   - Maintain files that document the compliance of libraries participating in the program.

Benefits/Outputs:

This goal will be evaluated based on the number of outputs to each measure listed below. These services will strive to provide the highest quality technology-based services possible, in the most cost-effective manner, to facilitate each library's mission as it applies to management and community service.

- Number of help desk tickets resolved
- Number of library site visits made by Technology staff per year

Expenditure of Funds:

LSTA funds will be used for, but not limited to, personnel, equipment, materials, supplies, printing, travel and training to support programs and activities to assist in meeting this goal. Federal regulations and guidelines will be followed, along with guidance from IMLS, to ensure appropriate expenditure of LSTA funds.

Timeline:

All activities will take place 2023-2027, unless otherwise indicated.

Goal 2: Support and Enhance the Library Workforce

Mississippi public library staff will have the advice, training, and support necessary to provide quality services and programs in their communities.

Needs Addressed:

Library Development

LSTA Priorities:

3) (a)Provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services, and (b) enhance efforts to recruit future professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, to the field of library and information services.
4) Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations.

Supporting Projects

In order to accomplish this goal, the following projects will be executed:

1. **Continuing Education** - Learning opportunities will be provided on a variety of topics designed to address the needs of library directors, mid-level managers, staff, and trustees.

   Activities:

   - Provide learning opportunities for library staff on traditional and emerging library topics through in-person, live virtual, and recorded meetings.
   - Annually assess library staff training needs.
   - Provide learning opportunities for library staff, including custom staff trainings, in response to identified needs.

Benefits/Outputs:

Library staff who participate in learning opportunities demonstrate new skills that improve library services for all Mississippians. This will be measured through the following outputs:

- Number of learning opportunities
- Number of attendees
- Satisfaction rating of each learning opportunity

2. **Consulting** - Advice, research, and support will be offered through a team of library consultants and other staff.

Activities:

- Provide advice upon request.
- Annually assess library staff needs based on topics queried.
- Provide training to consultants in response to identified needs.

Benefits/Outputs:

Those who receive advice from library consultants and other staff shall demonstrate new skills that improve library services for all Mississippians. This will be measured through the following outputs:

- Number of consulting hours
- Number of site visits
- Number of partnerships created to enhance public library service

Expenditure of Funds:

LSTA funds will be used for, but not limited to, personnel, equipment, materials, supplies, printing, travel and training to support programs and activities to assist in meeting this goal. Federal regulations and guidelines will be followed, along with guidance from IMLS, to ensure appropriate expenditure of LSTA funds.

Timeline:

All activities will take place 2023-2027, unless otherwise indicated.

Goal 3: Strengthen Libraries by Sharing Resources

By sharing resources, information, and access, Mississippi libraries will have strong, diverse collections available to all Mississippians so that they may discover resources and engage in

their communities.

<u>Needs Addressed</u>

Shared Resources

<u>LSTA Priorities</u>

1) Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats (including new and emerging technology), in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, economic and business development, health information, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy and other types of literacy skills.
2) Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. § 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services.
4) Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations.
7) Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

<u>Supporting Projects</u>

In order to accomplish this goal, the following projects will be executed:

Shared Resources - MLC will encourage, enable, and pursue resource sharing opportunities for print, electronic, and non-traditional resources in order to meet the needs of Mississippians, including individuals of diverse backgrounds and ethnicity.

<u>Activities</u>:

- Provide access to interlibrary loan system(s).
- Provide a resource library consisting of general and special collections to expand available resources.
- Provide access to cataloging resources.
- Provide access to professional research specialists to respond to queries.

<u>Benefits/Outputs</u>:

Mississippians continue to be pleased with resources available due to enhanced offerings through public libraries and MLC. This will be measured through the following outputs:

- Number of items shared statewide

- Number of reference queries received
- Number of items cataloged
- Number of electronic resources available
- Number of trainings held

2. **Reading Programs** - MLC will make resources available so that Mississippians may improve their general knowledge and skills through reading and discussion programs.

   Activities:

   - Develop and administer the Summer Library Program for public libraries.
   - Promote reading programs and opportunities for all Mississippians.

   Benefits/Outputs:

   Mississippians have increased opportunity to improve their general knowledge and skills through reading and discussion programs. This will be measured through the following outputs:

   - Number of reading programs held
   - Number of participants

Expenditure of Funds:

LSTA funds will be used for, but not limited to, personnel, equipment, materials, supplies, printing, travel and training to support programs and activities to assist in meeting this goal. Federal regulations and guidelines will be followed, along with guidance from IMLS, to ensure appropriate expenditure of LSTA funds.

Timeline:

All activities will take place 2023-2027, unless otherwise indicated.

Goal 4: Serve All Mississippians

Mississippians, including those with visual and physical disabilities, will have access to materials in the appropriate format.

Needs Addressed:

Access for All

LSTA Priorities:

1) expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats (including new and emerging technology), in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, economic and business development, health information, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy and other types of literacy skills.
4) develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations.
5) target library and information services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills.
7) develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

Supporting Projects

In order to accomplish this goal, the following projects will be executed:

1. **Talking Book Services**: MLC will administer the Library of Congress's National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled program to equalize library service to persons having difficulty using a library.

   Activities:
   - Provide access to resources in appropriate formats, professional staff, and adaptive equipment.
   - Identify individuals and institutions that qualify for the service.
   - Partner with other organizations to further program goals.

   Benefits/Outputs:

   Mississippians are satisfied with specialized service. This will be measured through the following outputs:

   - Number of patrons
   - Number of materials circulated
   - Number of outreach events attended

2. **Disability Outreach Support**: MLC will offer support services for those with disabilities and their families and offer training for public library staff on patrons with disabilities.

   Activities:
   - Provide parent support groups.
   - Provide educational activities for children with disabilities.
   - Provide training for public library staff on serving patrons with disabilities.

Benefits/Outputs:

Mississippians are satisfied with specialized service. This will be measured through the following outputs:

- Number of support groups held
- Number in attendance at events

Timeline:

All activities will take place 2023-2027, unless otherwise indicated.

Goal 5: Empower Libraries

Subgrants allow funding for libraries to determine what services are best needed in their communities and provide funding for resources to meet those needs.

Needs Addressed:

Technology Support Services
Library Development
Shared Resources
Access for All

LSTA Priorities:

1) Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats (including new and emerging technology), in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, economic and business development, health information, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and financial literacy and other types of literacy skills.
2) Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improve coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. § 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of

improving the quality of and access to library and information services.

3) (a) Provide training and professional development, including continuing education, to enhance the skills of the current library workforce and leadership, and advance the delivery of library and information services, and (b) enhance efforts to recruit future professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, to the field of library and information services.

4) Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations.

5) Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills.

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

7) Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, State, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

Supporting Projects:

In order to accomplish this goal, the following projects will be executed:

1. **Competitive Grants** - MLC will offer funding to benefit public libraries on a large scale to meet the needs of their communities when funding allows.

   Activities:

   - Assess available grant needs.
   - Create subgrants around needs identified.
   - Monitor reporting for adherence to rules and regulations.

2. **Non-Competitive Grants** - MLC will offer funding for public libraries on a small scale to meet the needs of their communities.

   Activities:

   - Assess available grant needs.
   - Create subgrants around needs identified.
   - Monitor reporting for adherence to rules and regulations.

3. **Cooperative Agreements** - MLC will offer funding for cooperative agreements that meet the needs of Mississippi libraries statewide.

   Activities:

- Assess available grant needs.
- Create subgrants around needs identified.
- Monitor reporting for adherence to rules and regulations.

Benefits/Outputs:

The benefits and outcomes for this goal will be measured based on the final reports from subgrantees and will vary each year depending on the project.

Expenditure of Funds:

LSTA funds will be used for, but not limited to, personnel, equipment, materials, supplies, printing, travel and training to support programs and activities to assist in meeting this goal. Federal regulations and guidelines will be followed, along with guidance from IMLS, to ensure appropriate expenditure of LSTA funds.

Timeline:

All activities will take place 2023-2027, unless otherwise indicated.

Coordination of Efforts

MLC has established partnerships with multiple entities for further achieving success of the Five-Year Plan. As projects unfold, MLC will work actively with partners and other state agencies to effectively achieve the goals established.

Currently, MLC coordinates resources and partners in programs with other entities such as: Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services, Mississippi Humanities Council, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Broadband Expansion and Accessibility of Mississippi, Mississippi Public Broadcasting, Mississippi Arts Commission, Mississippi State University Extension Service, Mississippi State University, Mississippi Department of Corrections, University of Mississippi Medical Center, University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi Digital Library, Mississippi Department of Transportation, The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress, Reader to Reader, Inc., in order to leverage the investment of funding sources.

MLC works with other educational entities to leverage the cost of statewide databases which provide online resources to information at significantly reduced pricing. This increases resources for all educational entities including K-12 through colleges.

Evaluation Plan

Evaluations are conducted on all projects within the Five-Year Plan. Depending on the project, various methods are used including output measures, performance measures, surveys, advisory groups, final evaluation reports, site visits, in person conversations, and observations.

The Mississippi State Legislature requires mandatory reporting of performance measures which include: Number of help desk tickets resolved, number of continuing education workshops held per year, percent increase of citizens informed by acquiring needed information through Mississippi libraries, number of visits by MLC staff, number of patrons utilizing braille, audio, etc., number of children participating in statewide summer library program, number of items borrowed and loaned on the ILL system, number of items available for use statewide on the ILL system, number of searches on the statewide Magnolia database and number of items available for use at MLC.

Subgrant recipients are required to complete final evaluations for each project awarded. These evaluations are used to further evaluate the success of individual projects that should be carried forward or possibly replicated on a statewide basis into larger projects. All projects report outcome-based information which is provided in the SPR annually as well as in other annual reporting.

Stakeholder Involvement

Stakeholders, specifically public library staff, have many opportunities to provide input in the development of the Five-Year Plan. The agency regularly seeks input from the various programs offered and uses that information for planning. Additionally, a third-party evaluator leads one on one focus sessions without MLC staff present to ensure everyone has a chance to offer ideas and thoughts. Information about participating in the focus sessions is provided well in advance through face-to-face meetings, emails and phone conversations.

Communication

Stakeholders, specifically public library staff, have many opportunities to provide input in the development of the Five-Year Plan. The agency regularly seeks input from the various programs offered and uses that information for planning. Additionally, a third-party evaluator leads one on one focus sessions without MLC staff present to ensure everyone has a chance to offer ideas and thoughts. Information about participating in the focus sessions is provided well in advance through face-to-face meetings, emails and phone conversations.

Monitoring

MLC uses both formal and informal methods of monitoring performance in the Five-Year Plan. Information gathered from review of annual reports, interlibrary loan, statistics, surveys, site visits, comments from library directors and staff, internal staff meetings, as well as other anecdotal methods are used to improve the programs within the Plan.

MLC monitors performance of its subgrant program with all staff in the grants department holding formal grant certifications. These staff members provide training, review of applications and close monitoring, based on risk assessments. Staff remain in close contact with the program managers throughout the year.

	GOAL	FOCAL AREA	PROJECT	INTENT
1	ENHANCE THE TECHNOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT OF MISSISSIPPI LIBRARIES	Institutional Capacity	Technology Support and Services	Improve library's physical and technology infrastructure
			Create Partnerships	
			E-rate Guidance and Support	
2	SUPPORT AND ENHANCE THE LIBRARY WORKFORCE	Institutional Capacity	Continuing Education	Improve the library workforce
			Consulting	Improve library operations
3	STRENGTHEN LIBRARIES BY SHARING RESOURCES	Information Access	Shared Resources	Improve users' ability to discover information resources
				Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
		Lifelong Learning	Reading Programs	Improve users' formal education
				Improve users' general knowledge and skills
4	SERVE ALL MISSISSIPPIANS	Information Access	Talking Book Services	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
			Disability Outreach Support	Improve users' formal education
				Improve users' general knowledge and skills
5	EMPOWER LIBRARIES	Can cover all focal intents	Can cover numerous projects	Can cover all intents

Appendix

<u>MLC Management Team</u>

Hulen Bivins, MLS, JD   Executive Director

Jennifer Lena, MPA, MLIS   Deputy Executive Director

Lynn Burris, MSM   Chief Financial Officer