

State Library Administrative Agency Adaptations in the Initial Months of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Ongoing Trends



Institute of Museum and Library Services

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Director

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Background

In March 2020, a pandemic of the novel coronavirus disease referred to as COVID-19 began to affect the United States. Between March 19 and April 6, 2020, 42 states and the District of Columbia implemented mandatory stay-at-home orders, and some counties and municipalities preceded these orders with localized actions and warnings (Kates, Michaud, & Tolbert, 2020). The pandemic impacted virtually all aspects of daily life in the United States, including public access to and administrative operations of libraries (Condic, 2021; Mabuie, 2020; Machovec, 2020; Wang & Lund, 2020; Todorinova, 2021). As of February 2022, nearly 2 years after the pandemic's onset, there have been approximately 402 million confirmed cases of the disease and 5.7 million linked deaths worldwide, with the United States accounting for roughly 76 million of the cases and 902,000 of the deaths.¹

Libraries across the country were strained by the effects of COVID-19 in myriad ways. Many closed library buildings for extended periods of time, while other libraries had to reduce hours or reassign staff to work with other agencies. At the same time, traditional library services were in even greater demand. As students moved to a virtual environment, Internet access became an absolute necessity. Laid-off workers needed to navigate unemployment claims on the Internet or available workforce development programs. Individuals now forced to stay in isolation needed a sense of community. Over the past 2 years, libraries have changed how they carry out nearly all aspects of their mission to simultaneously meet COVID-19-related challenges and serve their communities.²

Like other types of libraries and organizations, state library administrative agencies (SLAAs) faced these challenges and adapted their operations and services to meet state, community, and individual user needs. As provided in the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) (20 U.S.C. § 9122) of 2018, each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia establishes and authorizes an SLAA to assess, plan, and coordinate library services and resources.³ Specifically, SLAAs often provide important reference and information services to the state government, administer the state library and/or serve as the state archives, operate libraries for the blind and print disabled as affiliates of the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, provide professional

¹ See the World Health Organization (WHO) Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard. <https://covid19.who.int/>. Accessed February 10, 2022.

² See <https://www.ala.org/news/sites/ala.org.news/files/content/State-of-Americas-Libraries-Report-2021-4-21.pdf>.

³ The LSTA also makes provisions for library authorities in U.S. territories and freely associated states, which are not in scope for the SLAA Survey.

development training to library staff, and support the State Center for the Book. In some states, the SLAA provides library services to the general public.

In the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) SLAA Survey for fiscal year 2020 (FY 2020),⁴ 51 SLAAs provided unique information about their library's experience during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. The SLAAs also reported financial, staffing, and service information that has appeared in each of the historical SLAA Surveys. In lieu of a longer annual report, the FY 2020 SLAA Survey data are being summarized in two more focused research briefs. The first such brief, entitled *Functions and Roles of State Libraries: 2000 and 2020* (IMLS, 2021), focused on operations and services offered by SLAAs, noting changes that occurred over the 20-year span from 2000 to 2020.

The current brief presents selected findings from the FY 2020 SLAA Survey in two sections. First, a COVID-19-focused section summarizes what SLAAs reported for the early stages of the pandemic in terms of services provided, staffing policy changes, and physical outlet closures. A second section describes longer-term trends in revenue and expenditures, staffing levels, and library development transactions. This section provides continuity from traditional SLAA reporting by presenting key SLAA information on a longer time scale.

⁴ See <https://www.ims.gov/research-evaluation/data-collection/state-library-administrative-agency-survey>.

Methodology

The SLAA Survey is a census of the SLAAs in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Administered annually between 1994 and 2010, and biennially thereafter, the purpose of the SLAA Survey is to provide state and federal policymakers and other stakeholders with data on SLAA governance, services provided to libraries and library cooperatives, numbers and types of physical outlets operated, staffing levels, and revenues and expenditures, among other topics.

There is no sampling conducted in the SLAA Survey, and this census perennially achieves a 100 percent response rate from the 51 SLAAs. The respondents are SLAA employees designated by the chief officers of the SLAAs to gather and enter data into a web-based data collection tool; however, the chief officers must certify the data prior to submission to IMLS. Additional information on the survey methodology, the web-based tool, and validation processes appears in the data file documentation for the FY 2020 data (Pelczar et al., 2021). The FY 2020 SLAA Survey was the 22nd in the series and was fielded between January 11 and March 19, 2021.

To record information about the experiences of SLAAs during the pandemic, IMLS added new COVID-19-specific questions to the FY 2020 SLAA Survey. A list of these items appears in the Appendix. The items were drafted collaboratively by IMLS and its data collection agent, RTI International, and were subsequently reviewed by the IMLS Library Statistics Working Group, SLAA chief officers, and Office of Management and Budget prior to inclusion in the survey. These items were planned as one-time special additions, given the expectation at the time that the pandemic would be transitory.

To clearly define the scope and limitations of this brief, it is important to understand the timeline between the onset of the pandemic and the fiscal year definitions of SLAAs. For 46 SLAAs, the 2020 fiscal year started July 1, 2019, and ended June 30, 2020. Given that the pandemic shutdowns began in the United States in March 2020, the vast majority of SLAAs were, in effect, reporting on their experiences in the first three months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Exceptions are noted in Pelczar et al. (2021) and Figure 1, including how questions about governance and staffing levels use a reference date of October 1, 2020. However, given that the survey did not open for data collection until January 2021, and that retrospective survey recall is imperfect (Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000), it is possible that some SLAAs' responses are influenced by what was occurring between June 2020 and

January 2021.⁵ The pandemic also spread unevenly throughout the United States, with different states taking actions at different times. The reader should keep in mind that the impact of the pandemic as reported by SLAAs likely varied due to exogenous factors, including differing state fiscal years and the impact of geography on both the timing and transmission rate of COVID-19.

Figure 1. Timeline of SLAA Fiscal Years and the FY 2020 Survey



SLAA = state library administrative agency.

⁵ Each SLAA reports data for its respective state’s 2020 fiscal year, except for one item in Part B (Governance) and one in Part I (Staff), for which all respondents were instructed to report data as of October 1, 2020.

COVID-19 Experiences and Adaptations as Reported by SLAAs

During the pandemic, local, state, and federal governments encountered the dual challenge of providing new services to meet the emerging needs of their constituents and maintaining their existing services amid the operational limitations the pandemic prompted. To face these challenges, governments looked to leverage new and existing partnerships across governmental departments. SLAAs were not an exception to this pattern; similarly, the SLAAs reported forming new partnerships with other departments and agencies to provide services during the reporting period. Through these partnerships, the SLAAs reported a variety of activities to support libraries and their communities.

Services to Libraries

SLAAs provide information on the services they offer directly or by contract to libraries and library cooperatives in Part D of the SLAA Survey instrument. The FY 2020 version of the survey included a series of open-ended, follow-up questions aimed at learning the types of services that SLAAs provided during the reporting period in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, we group these open-ended responses into thematically linked categories. IMLS retains the verbatim responses within their data, and the data sets also include indicators of these groupings.

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of these categories. In all, 43 SLAAs (84 percent) indicated providing one or more services during the reporting period in response to the pandemic. The most common specific service reported was offering operational advice, consulting, or guidance (63 percent), often with respect to policies on public-facing closures or reopenings. More than half of SLAAs reported offering grants in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (53 percent). Other services mentioned, albeit less frequently, included holding regular virtual meetings, providing personal protective equipment (PPE), and producing Wi-Fi access maps.

While the intention of these follow-up questions was to gather insight into which services were newly offered as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is evidence in the data that some of the services may have already been in place. Specifically, we observed that all SLAAs reporting a pandemic-related service of advice/consulting/guidance, continuing education, or summer reading also indicated providing that service in the FY 2018 survey. That said, all Part D follow-up questions contained the clause “due to Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic,” so the specific services reported should reflect only those

changes instituted as a result of the pandemic and may have been pandemic-necessitated adaptations to better meet the evolving needs of the community.

Table 1. Summary of Services Provided by SLAAs to Libraries and Library Cooperatives during FY 2020 Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Service	Count of SLAAs	Percent
<i>One or more services</i>	43	84
Advice/consulting/guidance	32	63
Grants	27	51
Regular virtual meetings	13	26
Personal protective equipment	8	16
Virtual programming	8	16
Map production (e.g., Wi-Fi access)	6	12
Data capture/sharing	5	10
Continuing education	4	8
Summer reading programs	4	8

SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FY 2020.

Partnerships

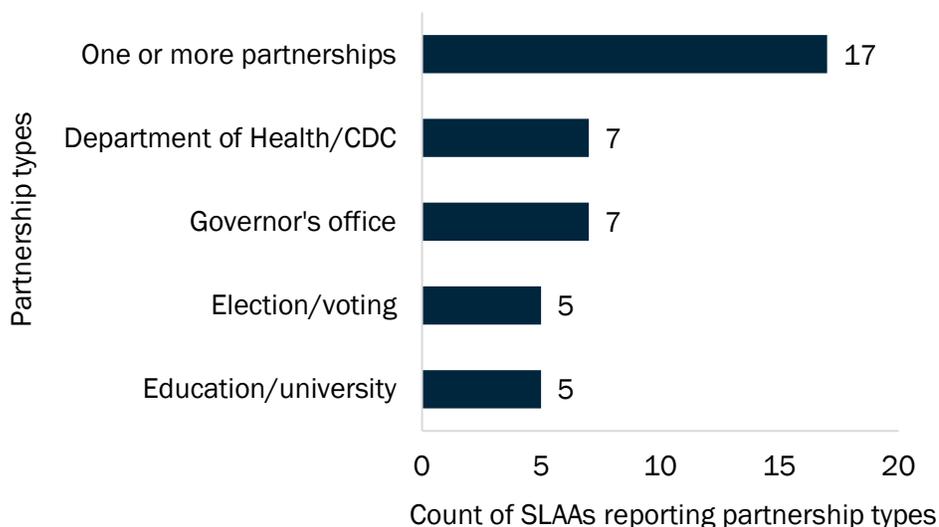
In addition to adding new or adapting existing services, SLAAs reported forming new partnerships with other departments and agencies to provide services during the reporting period due to the pandemic. Through these partnerships, they reported a variety of activities to support libraries and their communities.

Part D of the FY 2020 SLAA Survey instrument contained an open-ended item for SLAAs to report any partnerships formed with external departments or government agencies to facilitate services during the COVID-19 pandemic. As Figure 2 shows, 17 SLAAs (33 percent) formed one or more partnerships, most often with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or Department of Health within the state or with the governor’s office. Five SLAAs (10 percent) reported forming partnerships with election/voting offices or with a specific university or their state’s Department of Education.

To illustrate the variety of partnerships and their activities, we include the examples of two SLAAs that forged partnerships with 3 of the 4 specific entities listed in Figure 2. The first is Colorado, which worked jointly with the Department of Public Health & Environment, the governor’s office, and the Department of Education to develop guidelines for how libraries should operate under each level of “openness.” The second is Rhode Island, which

partnered with the Department of Health to provide pandemic guidance, with the Governor’s Office to distribute books in support of a statewide reading challenge, and with the Secretary of State to distribute voting registration applications.

Figure 2. Summary of Partnerships Reported by SLAAs during FY 2020 Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic



CDC = Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; SLAA = state library administrative agency.
Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FY 2020.

Staffing Changes

Like many employers during the early stages of the pandemic, SLAAs adapted to new restrictions related to on-site work. For example, during the reporting period, SLAAs indicated offering increased workplace flexibility and a variety of emergency leave options. Some SLAAs also reported having to reduce staff hours or to furlough or lay off staff.

As part of the conventional staffing information gathered in Part I of the SLAA Survey instrument, the FY 2020 version of the instrument asked each SLAA to report staffing changes that occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As shown in Table 2, all 51 SLAAs reported implementing a change in telework options. Considering the stay-at-home orders issued by states (Moreland et al., 2020), this finding is to be expected. The second most common policy change was that 34 of the 51 SLAAs (67 percent) indicated enacting state or federal emergency leave options. Only 7 SLAAs (California, Florida, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island) reported reassigning staff to another agency. Fortunately, furloughs or layoffs and

reduced staff hours were reported by only 10 percent of SLAAs. Specifically, only 5 states indicated that they furloughed or laid off staff as a result of the pandemic (Michigan, New Jersey, South Dakota, Washington, and Wyoming), and only 5 states reported reducing hours for certain staff (Hawaii, Michigan, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and South Dakota).

Table 2. Summary of Staffing Changes Implemented by SLAAs during FY 2020 Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Service	Count of SLAAs	Percent
Change in telework options	51	100
Emergency leave options (state or federal)	34	67
Reassignment to another agency	7	14
Furloughs/layoffs	5	10
Reduced staff hours	5	10

SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FY 2020.

Only 1 SLAA (Michigan) introduced all 5 possible staffing changes simultaneously. Two SLAAs (New Hampshire and Rhode Island) implemented 4 of the 5—all but furloughs or layoffs. The remaining SLAAs implemented 3 changes or fewer.

Physical Outlet Closures and Public Occupancy Limitations

Part E of the SLAA Survey instrument contains questions about the number, type, and hours of operation for physical outlets affiliated with the SLAA, and the FY 2020 version of the instrument was augmented with follow-up questions assessing how the COVID-19 pandemic affected public access to those outlets. The 51 SLAAs reported operating a total of 96 outlets in FY 2020. Most commonly, SLAAs reported operating just 1 outlet (32 of 51), but 18 SLAAs reported operating 2 outlets or more, with a maximum of 13 outlets (Washington). Hawaii does not report operating any outlets and was thus excluded from the figures and analyses presented in this section.⁶ Rhode Island, which reported operating 1 outlet that was not open to the public, was also excluded.

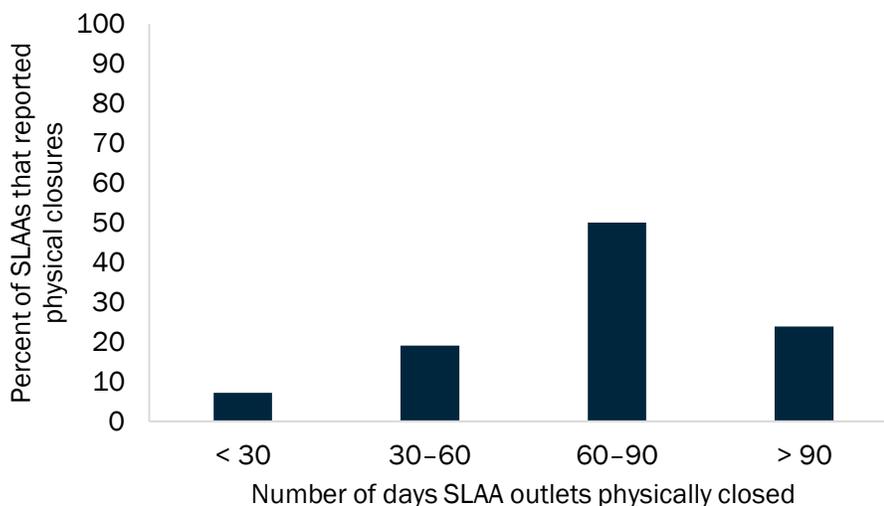
While reviewing the physical outlet closures that SLAAs reported, it is important to bear in mind the caveats of the timeline overlap between state fiscal years and the pandemic onset that was discussed in the “Methodology” section. Of the 49 SLAAs in scope, 44 (90 percent) indicated that one or more outlets were physically closed to the public during their reporting period due to the

⁶ Hawaii’s SLAA also operates as the public library for the entire state, and the number of outlets and other data are reported in the annual Public Libraries Survey.

pandemic. Respondents were instructed that “physically closed to the public” means that no one aside from staff could access buildings and/or bookmobiles, regardless of whether the outlet concurrently offered virtual, Wi-Fi, or “curbside” services. The 5 SLAAs reporting no physical outlet closures to the public during their reporting period were Arkansas, Delaware, Oklahoma, Utah, and Wyoming.

For those SLAAs reporting physical closures, the median number of days closed was 75. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the number of days that SLAAs reported outlets as closed in monthly increments. Note, however, that all 44 SLAAs indicated they were able to maintain at least a portion of their regular services to the public during the closures, such as answering inquiries made via phone or email, hosting virtual programming, or offering curbside delivery or drive-through circulation of physical materials.

Figure 3. Distribution of Days One or More SLAAs Reported Outlets as Physically Closed to the Public during FY 2020 Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic



SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Note: Distribution is among the 42 SLAAs reporting a physical closure and following up with a nonmissing value for survey item E-011.1 (see the Appendix). This figure excludes 2 of the 44 SLAAs that reported an outlet closure (Kansas and Oregon).

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FY 2020.

A separate question on the FY 2020 SLAA Survey instrument asked SLAA respondents to specify whether 1 or more outlets reduced hours without physically closing entirely. Only 3 SLAAs (Indiana, North Dakota, and Texas) responded that they reduced hours during their respective reporting period, and those reported a median of 27 days operating with reduced hours. Note

that all 3 of these SLAAs also reported having 1 or more outlets physically closed to the public at some point during FY 2020.

Table 3 presents figures on how many outlets reported being physically closed and/or with limited public occupancy during the overlap between their reporting period and the COVID-19 pandemic as a function of outlet type. Table 4 presents physical closures and limited occupancy based on the key user groups served by the outlets. Both tables indicate how outlets were much more likely to report physical closures than capacity limitations. For instance, SLAAs indicated that 38 of the 46 main outlets (83 percent) physically closed at some point during the portion of their reporting period that overlapped with the pandemic onset, while only 17 outlets (37 percent) remained open with limited public occupancy practices in place. Similarly, SLAAs reported that 61 of the 68 SLAA outlets (90 percent) serving the general public were physically closed at some point during their reporting period, whereas only 26 (38 percent) were kept open but with capacity limitations. Table 4 reveals that closure rates for outlets serving specific user groups hardly vary relative to those serving the general public, but they are less likely to report public occupancy limitations.

Table 3. Number of SLAA Outlets Physically Closed to the Public or Operating at Limited Public Occupancy during FY 2020 Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, by Outlet Type

Outlet type	Count	Count closed	Percent closed	Count limited	Percent limited
Main	46	38	83	17	37
Other	46	43	94	13	28
Bookmobile	3	3	100	0	0
All outlets	95	84	89	30	32

SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Note: The figures in this table reflect the 95 unique outlets operated by the 49 SLAAs, excluding Hawaii and Rhode Island.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FY 2020.

Table 4. Number of SLAA Outlets Physically Closed to the Public or Operating at Limited Public Occupancy during FY 2020 Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, by User Group Served

User group served by SLAA outlet	Count	Count closed	Percent closed	Count limited	Percent limited
Blind/handicapped individuals	46	42	91.3	12	26.1
State correctional institution residents	29	26	89.7	5	17.2
Other state institution residents	23	20	87.0	6	26.1
State government employees	56	48	85.7	17	30.4
General public	68	61	89.7	26	38.2

SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Note: The figures in this table reflect the 95 unique outlets operated by the 49 SLAAs, excluding Hawaii and Rhode Island. Outlet counts do not sum to 95 because respondents are permitted to designate more than one user group served by a particular outlet.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FY 2020.

Longer-Term Trends in SLAA Data

The SLAA report has traditionally been a detailed annual report that presents a range of findings. To provide some continuity for broader trend reporting between survey years, this section of the brief discusses some longer-term trends that include the data reported in the FY 2020 SLAA Survey. The reader should take into consideration that the trend lines include the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic while interpreting data relative to prior years.

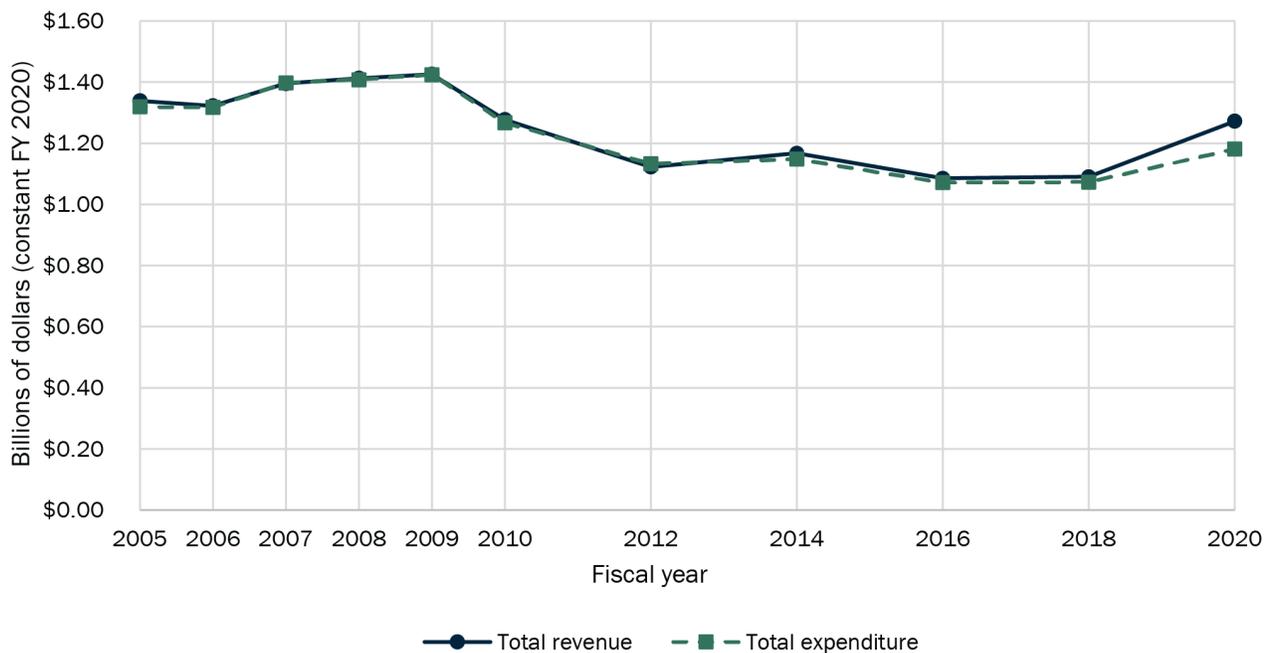
Revenue and Expenditures

Figure 4 shows the trends in revenues and expenditures for the 15-year period between FY 2005 and FY 2020. Between FY 2005 and FY 2012, there were strong declines in revenues (16 percent) and expenditures (14 percent); between FY 2012 and FY 2014, however, revenues increased modestly (4 percent), whereas expenditures remained stable. Between FY 2014 and FY 2016, revenues and expenditures dipped again with moderately meaningful changes (7 percent each), but there were no meaningful changes between FY 2016 and FY 2018. Between FY 2018 and FY 2020, the revenues reported by SLAAs for their fiscal year increased by 17 percent and reported expenditures increased by 10 percent. Overall, between FY 2005 and FY 2020, revenues declined by 5 percent and expenditures by 10 percent. Comparisons are based on all values being adjusted to FY 2020 dollars, which may differ from similar figures in earlier reports that were adjusted to prior-year dollars.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) was enacted on March 27, 2020.⁷ The FY 2020 revenue reported by SLAAs includes any initial CARES Act funding provided to them by IMLS (distributed April 21, 2020) or other federal agencies. Because of the fiscal year boundaries, SLAAs may have received additional funding as they moved into FY 2021 that is not reflected in these data. Although expenditures typically track close to revenue for SLAAs, expenditures appeared to trail revenue in FY 2020 because of normal lags between the receipt of and expenditure of funds, which may have been amplified because of the CARES Act.

⁷ See <https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr748/BILLS-116hr748enr.pdf>.

Figure 4. Total Revenue and Expenditures for SLAAs, FYs 2005–2020



SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Note: Data are adjusted to constant 2020 dollars.

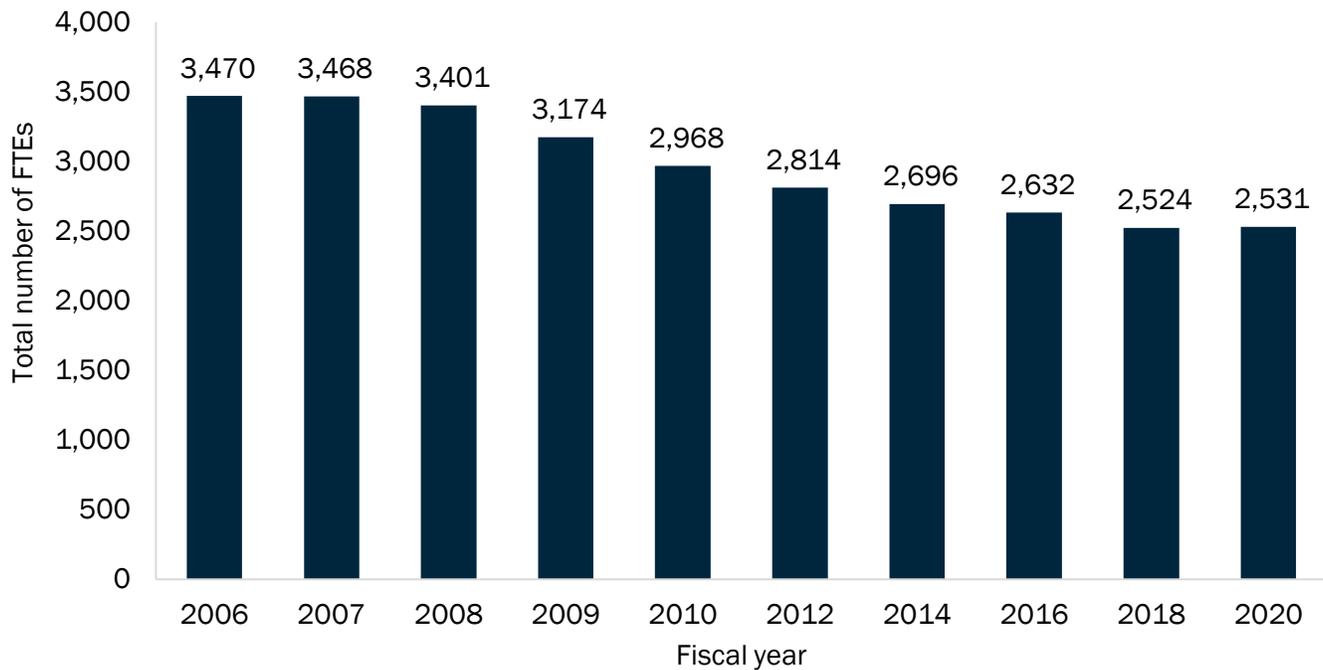
Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FYs 2005–2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

Staffing

The number of SLAA full-time-equivalent (FTE) staff has declined steadily over the last 14 years (Figure 5), a finding that was previously reported in the FY 2018 SLAA Survey Report (IMLS, 2020). In FY 2006, SLAAs reported employing 3,470 FTEs; by FY 2020, that number had dropped 27 percent to 2,531. The biggest change began around FY 2008, with the onset of the Great Recession, but the rate of decline has slowed in recent years.

Between 2008 and 2018, FTE staffing levels consistently dropped between 2 percent and 7 percent at each reporting cycle (annually until 2010, then biennially). FY 2020 marked a change in that pattern and was the first occasion since 2008 where the total FTE figure increased, although it was only an increase of 7 FTEs nationally (< 1 percent).

Figure 5. Trend in Total SLAA FTEs, FYs 2006–2020



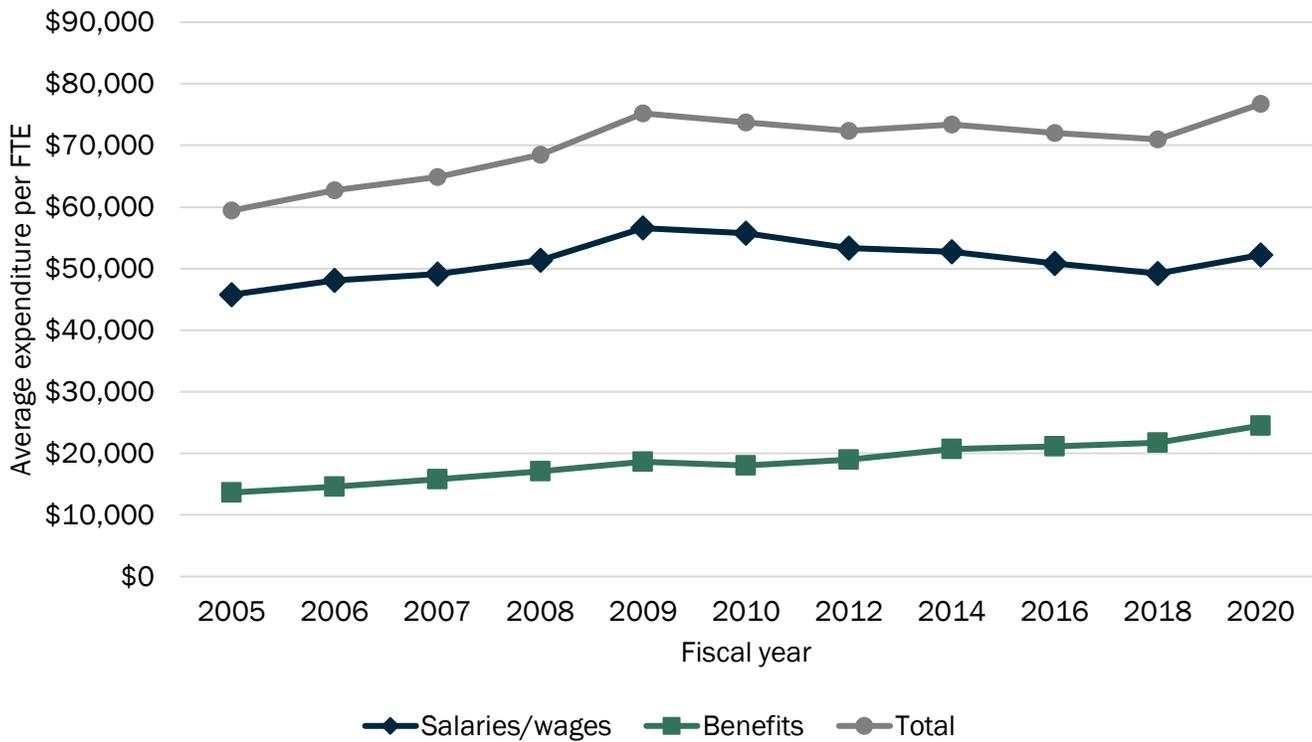
FTE = full-time equivalent; SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FYs 2006–2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

Since FY 2005, SLAAs’ total staffing expenditures per FTE has increased 29.1 percent, from \$54,417 to \$79,721,⁸ Figure 6 illustrates how this average FTE expenditure increase has been driven primarily by an increase in benefits and less so by increases in salaries/wages. The increase in benefits accounts for roughly two-thirds of the overall increase. It is also worth noting, however, that in contrast to prior years the increases seen between FY 2018 and FY 2020 are relatively larger and driven by increases in both wages and benefits.

⁸ The average FTE expenditures in a fiscal year, defined as total staffing expenditures—reported in the aggregate and partitioned into salaries/wages and benefits—divided by the number of FTEs for that year. For comparability purposes, dollar amounts in previous years were adjusted for inflation via gross domestic product adjustment factors produced by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, as specified by Equation 1 of IMLS (2020).

Figure 6. Average SLAA FTE Expenditures, FYs 2005–2020



FTE = full-time equivalent.

Note: Data are adjusted to constant 2020 dollars.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FYs 2005–2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

Library Development Transactions

Library development transactions that SLAAs conduct include (1) awarding federal LSTA and state grants, (2) offering continuing education events, and (3) tracking total attendance at these events. All of these values as reported by SLAAs increased between FY 2018 and FY 2020 (Table 5). We will look at longer-term trends for each of these transaction types and possible explanations for these single-cycle increases.

Table 5. Total Number of Library Development Transactions, by Type, for Applicable SLAAs, FYs 2018 and 2020

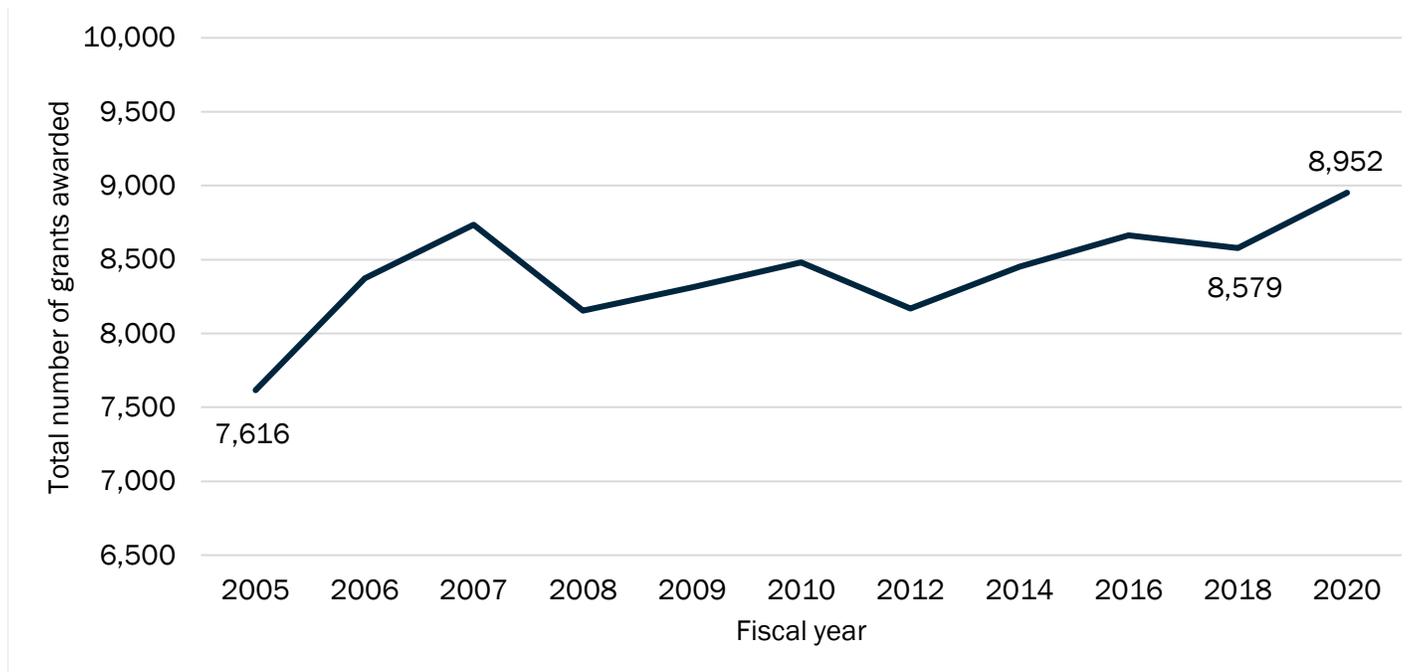
Transaction type	FY 2018	FY 2020	Relative change (%)
Total LSTA and state grants awarded	8,579	8,952	4
Continuing education events	6,785	7,465	10
Total attendance at the events	185,383	403,124	117

LSTA = Library Services and Technology Act; SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FY 2020.

With respect to grants awarded, the increase between FY 2018 and FY 2020 follows the larger trend observed in Figure 7, which shows that the total number of grants awarded increased from 7,616 in FY 2005 to 8,952 in FY 2020. This is an 18 percent increase over that time period.

Figure 7. Trend in Total Grants Awarded by SLAAs, FYs 2005–2020



SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FYs 2005–2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

To investigate whether the increase between FY 2018 and FY 2020 had any basis other than the existing trend, we mined the change explanations reported by SLAAs as part of the data collection validation system. If the change between the last reported value (in this case, FY 2018) and the current reported value (FY 2020) is 25 percent different (25 percent more or

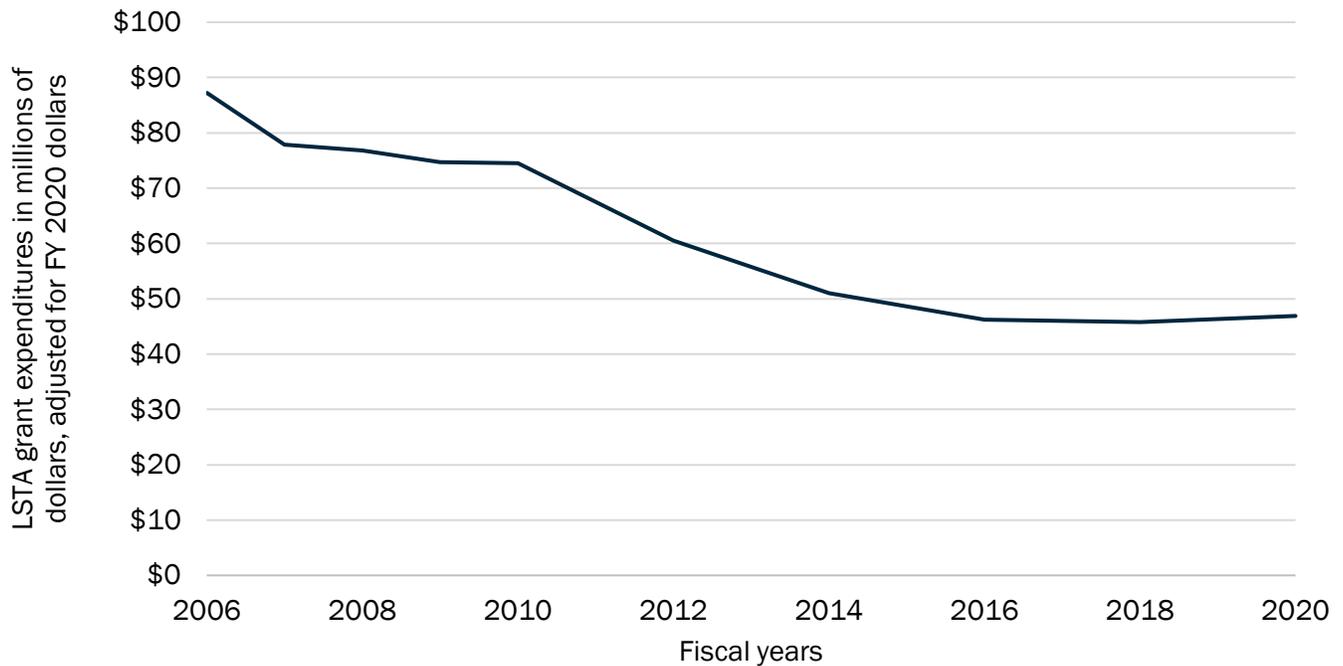
25 percent less), the system asks the data provider to explain the difference. Only SLAAs with a large enough difference to trigger this edit check were asked to provide this explanation, so the responses may not apply to the SLAAs that were not prompted to provide a response.

Of the 24 SLAAs that were asked to provide a change explanation, 2 confirmed that the number was correct without a specific explanation. Of the 14 SLAAs that had an increase between FY 2018 and FY 2020 and provided an explanation, 8 reported that the increase was related to COVID-19 by using terms such as “COVID-19 Response Grants,” “mini-grants for COVID-19,” and “CARES Act grants.” The remaining SLAAs that reported an increase in grants indicated that the increase was related to reporting changes in what kinds of grants are included (n=2), increases in state funding (n=1), or a shift in providing grants instead of materials (n=1).

For the 8 SLAAs that experienced a decrease in the number of grants between FY 2018 and FY 2020, 3 reported that the pandemic affected how many grants they could award or how many applicants they had. Of the remaining states with decreases, 2 reported that grant types or programs were no longer available, 2 confirmed the values with no additional explanation, 1 said the difference was based on reporting definition changes, and 1 reported that fewer state funds were available. Therefore, SLAAs reported that the pandemic affected both increases and decreases to their grant offerings, depending on the situation.

As Figure 8 demonstrates, the increased number of grants awarded has occurred against the backdrop of steadily decreasing LSTA expenditures allotted to grants, particularly since FY 2010, even after adjusting prior years’ dollar amounts to FY 2020 dollars. Because the number of grants is increasing while the funding directed toward grants is decreasing, this likely means that each grant has a smaller dollar value.

Figure 8. Trends in Reported LSTA Expenditures for Grants, FYs 2006–2020



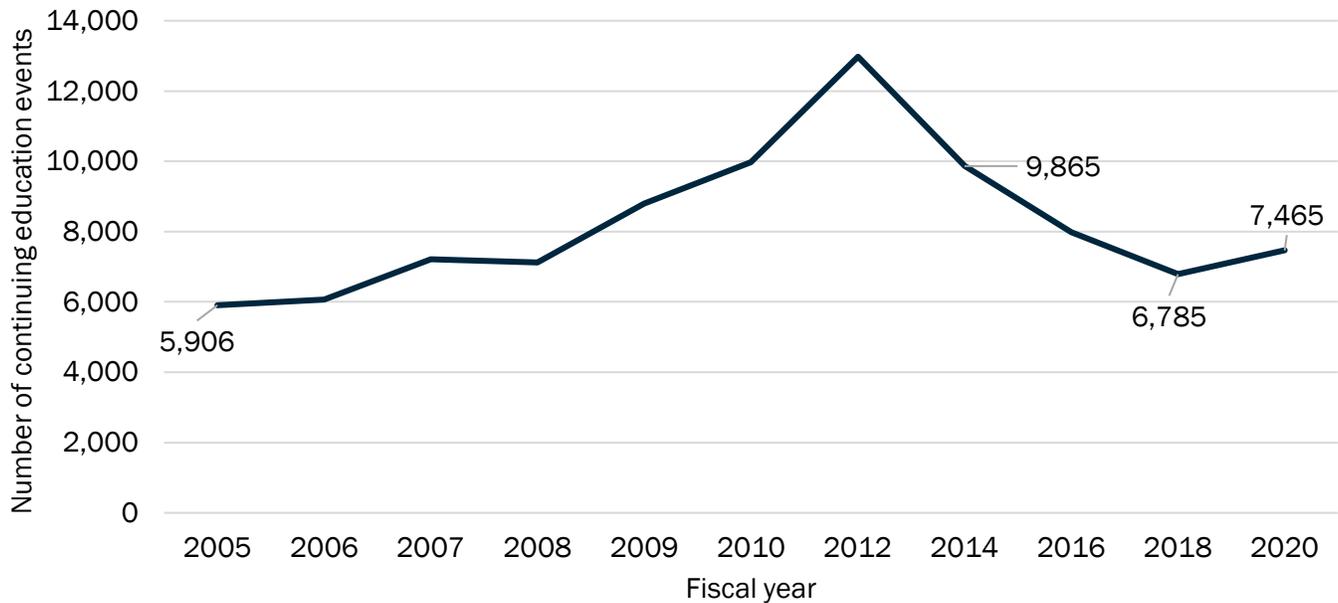
LSTA = Library Services and Technology Act.

Note: Data are adjusted to constant 2020 dollars.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FYs 2006–2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

With respect to continuing education events, the trend line in Figure 9 shows that the total number of events increased gradually from FY 2005 (5,906 events reported) to FY 2014 (9,865 events reported) but began decreasing thereafter until 2018. The total value reported for FY 2012 appears to be an outlier and stems from high outlier values reported by 3 states that year. These could have been reporting errors, but we do not otherwise have an explanation for that historical difference. Viewed in the context of the longer trend for the number of continuing education events, the 10 percent increase between FY 2018 and FY 2020 was unexpected.

Figure 9. Trend in Total Number of Continuing Education Program Events Held by SLAAs, FYs 2005–2020



SLAA = state library administrative agency.

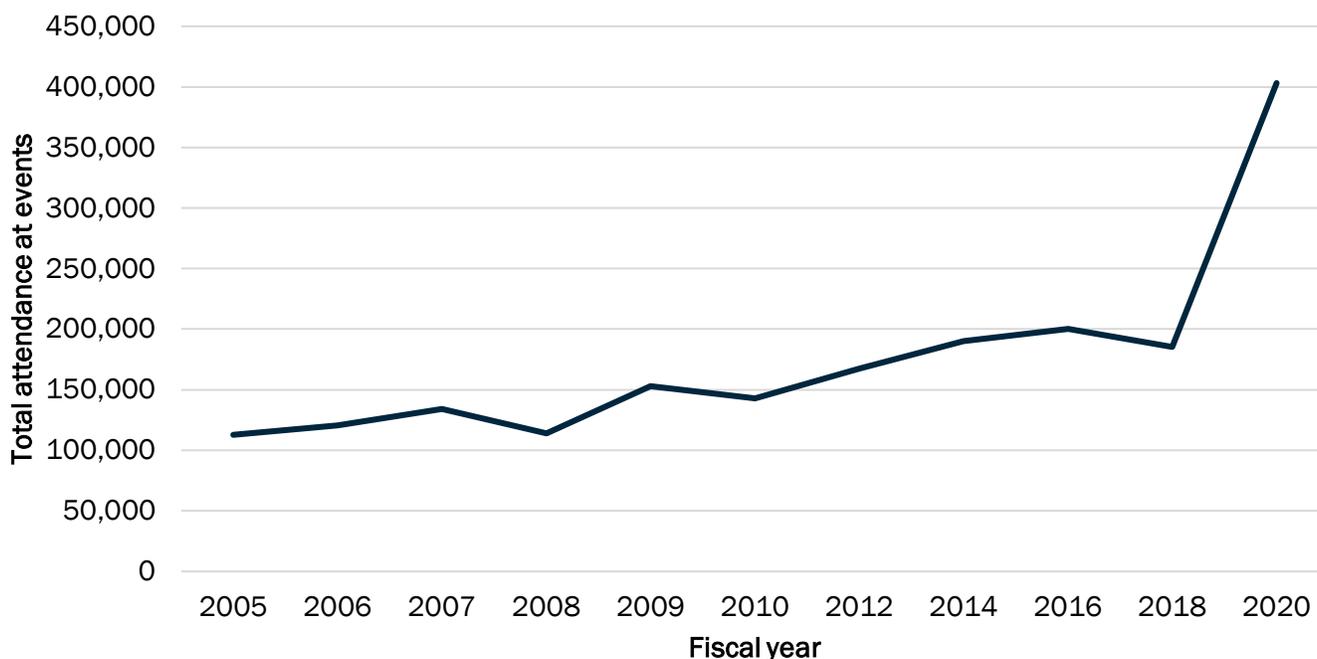
Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FYs 2005–2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

Just as we reviewed the change explanations for the grants awarded, we evaluated the explanations provided by any SLAA for a large difference in their number of events between FY 2018 and FY 2020. This edit check is triggered if the current year’s value is not within 25 percent to 225 percent of the prior year’s and the value change is ± 50 . Only 10 SLAAs were required to report explanations for this item. Of the 7 SLAAs that provided a justification for a large increase, 4 cited COVID or the pandemic as the reason for the increase. A further 2 SLAAs noted they had an increase in the number of online or virtual events offered without mentioning the pandemic. The final SLAA with an increase cited better recordkeeping. For the 3 SLAAs that reported a justification for a large decrease, all 3 cited the pandemic as the reason for the change in the number of events. Again, these reasons may not apply to SLAAs that were not prompted to supply a justification.

Looking at the total attendance at continuing education programs as reported by SLAAs for their fiscal years, there is a trend of attendance increasing overall (Figure 10), with attendance counts increasing 64 percent between FY 2005 and FY 2018. There have been a few periodic decreases, between 2007 and 2008 (-7 percent), 2009 and 2010 (-15 percent), and 2016 and 2018 (-7 percent). The change between FY 2018 and FY 2020 is a 117 percent increase, and it is a much larger increase than any other for attendance. While

one reason for the overall increase could be improved recordkeeping, there are likely additional factors fueling the large increase in FY 2020.

Figure 10. Trend in Total Number of Attendees at Continuing Education Program Events Reported by SLAAs, FYs 2005–2020



SLAA = state library administrative agency.

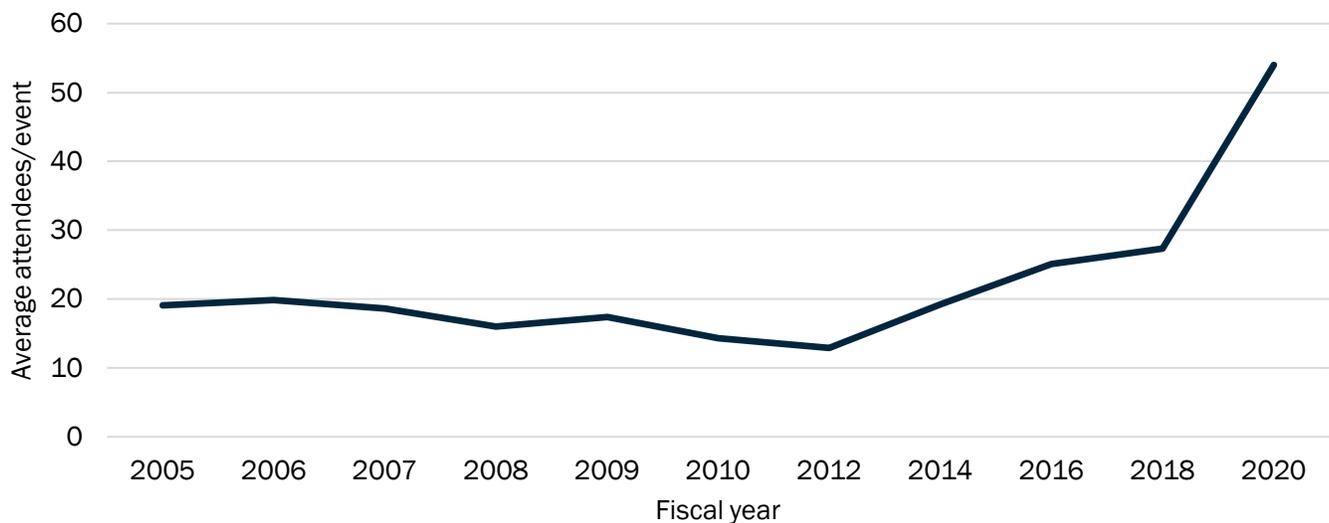
Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FYs 2005–2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

Again, we look at the justifications that SLAAs provided for large changes. The edit check for attendance is triggered when the current year’s value is not within 50 percent to 200 percent of the prior reporting year’s and the count change is $\pm 1,000$. While 46 SLAAs provided justifications for their changes between FY 2018 and FY 2020, only 5 had a small enough change (or no change) to not provide one. Among the 29 SLAAs that provided justifications because their reported values increased between FY 2018 and FY 2020, the most frequently cited reason was the switch to online or virtual offerings, the pandemic, and staff availability, often in combination: 24 of the 29 named virtual programs as the reason and 16 named COVID-19, and 14 of these cited both as co-factors. Additionally, 7 SLAAs reported that some variation of staff being home or having availability was a factor, and 2 SLAAs that cited the pandemic and online options also noted they were offering a new training series that could have attracted attendees. The remaining reasons include better marketing of offerings, changes in reporting inclusion, and the agency building being closed (n=1 each).

Of the 17 SLAAs that were prompted to provide a justification for a reported decrease in total attendance between FY 2018 and FY 2020, 10 cited the pandemic as a reason for the decrease in attendance. Some of these SLAAs cited COVID-19 with another co-factor—building construction, travel bans, or building closures (n=1 for each)—and noted that switching to virtual programs was not viable due to connectivity. Other reasons provided without also citing the pandemic include fewer events being offered (n=4); big annual events being cancelled (n=2); and better recordkeeping, building closures (without also citing the pandemic), and confirming the data without providing a reason (n=1 each). The pandemic is again reported as a reason for both more and less attendance at events.

Using national totals, changes to average attendance at events follows the same pattern as the total attendance at events (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Trend in Average Number of Attendees at Continuing Education Program Events Reported by SLAAs, FYs 2005–2020



SLAA = state library administrative agency.

Source: IMLS, State Library Administrative Agencies Survey, FYs 2006–2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, and 2020.

Summary

SLAAs reported notable changes during the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic in services, operations, and staffing. SLAAs reported that they continued to provide services to their state, community, and other users during FY 2020 and that they had been adding new services or adapting existing services in the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. New services that SLAAs reported include offering operational advice or guidance with respect to policies on public-facing closures/re-openings and offering grants. Other services reported include holding regular virtual meetings, providing PPE, and producing Wi-Fi access maps. Services that may have been adapted due to the pandemic include advice/consulting/guidance, continuing education, and summer reading programs. SLAAs also indicated that they formed new partnerships to deliver services with departments of health, the CDC, or the governor's office or entered into partnerships related to education, elections, or voting materials.

SLAAs also reported changes in staffing policies during the initial stages of the pandemic, primarily in the use of teleworking and emergency leave options—but also, in some cases, for the reassignment of staff, furloughs/layoffs, and reduced hours for staff. Finally, although most SLAAs reported some level of physical closure of their outlets, all of those that physically closed indicated they were able to maintain at least a portion of their regular services to the public, such as answering inquiries sent via phone or email, hosting virtual programming, or offering curbside delivery or drive-through circulation of physical materials.

Examining SLAA data across multiple collection periods can help identify larger trends and show changes that might only emerge over several years. The examination of trends also provides continuity with previous SLAA reports. Several trends were notable when considering the new FY 2020 data. These trends illustrate that SLAAs are working to continually provide more to the libraries they serve despite challenges and pressures to the contrary.

SLAAs reported staffing numbers and wages in FY 2020 that appeared to move against prior downward trends. SLAAs reported an increase in the median number of FTEs for the first time since prior to FY 2006. They also reported an increase in average salary and wage expenditures per FTE for the first time since FY 2009. Data from the FY 2022 SLAA collection should help shed light on whether this marks a turning point toward increased or plateaued staffing levels and wages at SLAAs or just a blip within a continuing downward trend.

SLAAs also reported notable increases in the number of grants awarded, continuing education events, and attendance at events. The increase in the number of grants since FY 2018 fits within a more general trend of more total grants awarded since FY 2008, but there is also evidence that at least some of this increase in FY 2020 was driven by COVID-19-related needs and funding (e.g., CARES Act funding). While the total number of continuing education events held in FY 2020 increased overall by 10 percent from the previous cycle, the total attendance at events increased by 117%. The total attendance at events for 2020 was higher than in any previous SLAA survey year. Although FY 2020 only represents the first few months of the pandemic, it is likely that the combination of an increased need for these events and the move toward virtual events during the pandemic were key drivers of this large increase in numbers. It will be interesting to see if SLAAs maintain these higher attendance numbers going forward and, if so, whether the move to virtual programming that can reach more individuals may be a lasting effect of the pandemic.

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Appendix: COVID-19 Questions

The following questions on COVID-19 were added to the State Library Administrative Agency (SLAA) Survey for FY 2020.

Survey Item	Question
D_SV-110	Types of Services Any Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic related services (e.g., aid or grants, policy or closure advice, or pandemic response) to libraries or library cooperatives
D_SV-110.1	Specify service(s) _____ Write in (250 characters max)
D_SV-102	Were one or more services to libraries and library cooperatives reduced or suspended at any time due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
D_OA-040	Operational Assistance Services / Types of Services Any Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic related operations assistance?
D_OA-040.1	Specify service(s) _____ Write in (250 characters max)
D_OA-050	Were one or more operational assistance services reduced or suspended at any time due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
D_CI-070	Coordination/Integration Services / Types of Services Any Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic related coordination services?
D_CI-070.1	Specify service(s) _____ Write in (250 characters max)
D_CI-080	Were one or more coordination/integration services reduced or suspended at any time due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
D_PA-070	Program Assistance Services / Types of Services Any Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic related program assistance?
D_PA-070.1	Specify service(s) _____ Write in (250 characters max)
D_PA-080	Were one or more program assistance services reduced or suspended at any time due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
D_PA-090	Did the SLAA engage in partnerships with any government agencies or departments outside your SLAA to provide services due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
D_PA-090.1	If Yes: Describe how the SLAA partnered with other government agencies or departments to provide services due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. _____ (Write in, 250 characters max)
E-011	Did any SLAA outlets physically close entirely due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
E-011.1	If yes, for how many days were SLAA outlets closed (when they typically would have been open) due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-011.2	If yes, did SLAA staff continue to provide services to the public during any portion of the period when the building was physically closed to the public? Y/N
E-012	Did any SLAA outlets reduce hours, but not close entirely, due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
E-012.1	If E-012=yes: For how many days did SLAA outlets have reduced hours (when they typically would have been open) due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?

Survey Item	Question
E-013	If E-011 or E-012=yes: During a typical week when SLAA outlets had reduced hours or were closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, how many total hours were SLAA outlets open?
E-050	Main or central outlet (b) How many of these outlets closed to the public due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (c) How many of these outlets implemented limited public occupancy practices for in-person services due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-060	Other outlets, excluding bookmobiles (b) How many of these outlets closed to the public due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (c) How many of these outlets implemented limited public occupancy practices for in-person services due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-070	Bookmobiles (b) How many of these outlets closed to the public due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (c) How many of these outlets implemented limited public occupancy practices for in-person services due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-080	TOTAL Outlets (b) How many of these outlets closed to the public due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (c) How many of these outlets implemented limited public occupancy practices for in-person services due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-090	Blind/physically handicapped individuals (e) How many total outlets serving this group closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (f) How many total outlets serving this group implemented limited occupancy policies due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-100	Residents of State correctional institutions (e) How many total outlets serving this group closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (f) How many total outlets serving this group implemented limited occupancy policies due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-110	Residents of other State institutions (e) How many total outlets serving this group closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (f) How many total outlets serving this group implemented limited occupancy policies due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-120	State government employees (e) How many total outlets serving this group closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (f) How many total outlets serving this group implemented limited occupancy policies due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
E-130	General public (e) How many total outlets serving this group closed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? (f) How many total outlets serving this group implemented limited occupancy policies due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
G-010.1	Service Transactions / Circulation (Exclude items checked out to another library) Was this service impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
G-020.1	Service Transactions / Interlibrary loan/document delivery Provided to other libraries Was this service impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
G-030.1	Service Transactions / Interlibrary loan/document delivery Received from other libraries and document deliver services. Was this service impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N

Survey Item	Question
G-040.1	Service Transactions / Reference transactions Was this service impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
G-050.1	Service Transactions / Library visits Was this service impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
H-010.1	Library Development Transactions LSTA and State grants: Grants Award Was the total number impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
H-020.1	Library Development Transactions Continuing education programs: Number of events Was the total number impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
H-030.1	Library Development Transactions Total attendance at events Was the total number impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
H-040	Did the SLAA provide any Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic related library development (e.g., virtual services, COVID-19 related professional development training, meetings with library leaders, resources/tool kits, re-opening guidance)? Y/N
I-060	Did your SLAA have to implement any of these staffing changes due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in FY2020? (This question only refers to paid staff.) Change in telework options Y/N
I-070	Furloughs/layoffs Y/N
I-080	Reduced staff hours Y/N
I-090	Emergency leave options (state or federal) Y/N
I-100	Staff re-assignment to another agency Y/N
J-200	Did SLAA receive any revenue related to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N If, yes, please list below. Specify program(s), title(s), and funding amount for each source of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic related revenue Program and Title: _____ Amount: _____
K_AO-070	Operating expenditures for SLAA and allied operations. Do not include funds distributed to libraries and library cooperatives in items K_AO-010 to K_AO-060. Were any of these operating expenditures impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
K_OE-030	Other expenditures for SLAA and allied operations only: Were any of these other expenditures impacted by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
M-070.1	Has SLAA funding or facilitation of digitization or digital programs or services changed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic? Y/N
M-070.2	If Yes to M-070.1, describe how SLAA funding or facilitation of digitization or digital programs or services changed. _____ (250 characters max)
M-130.1	Has SLAA funding or facilitation of library access to the Internet changed due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
M-130.2	If Yes to M-130.1, describe how SLAA funding or facilitation of library access to the Internet changed. _____ (250 characters max)

LSTA = Library Services and Technology Act; SLAA = state library administrative agency.