

Nebraska Library Commission

Evaluation of the 2018-2022 Library Services and Technology Act Plan

Evaluated by

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LSTA 2018-2022 PLAN EVALUATION

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Evaluation Summary

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), the federal agency responsible for implementing the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA), requires state grant recipients to conduct an independent evaluation of programs funded with grant funds as delineated in the 2018 - 2022 LSTA Five-Year Plan (Plan). The Nebraska Library Commission (Commission), the state administrative library agency that administers LSTA Program in Nebraska, engaged consultant Sally G. Reed to conduct the Plan evaluation.

The Nebraska Library Commission is part of the executive branch of state government. Per state statute, the Commission is responsible for the statewide promotion, development, and coordination of library services. In fulfilling these functions, the Commission works with all types of libraries—public, school, college and university, special, and institutional libraries. A major resource assisting the Commission in working toward its mission is LSTA funding provided by IMLS.

LSTA purposes for this period are as follows:

Overall Purposes of LSTA (20 U.S.C. § 9121)

- enhance coordination among federal programs that relate to library and information services;
- promote continuous improvement in library services in all types of libraries in order to better serve the people of the United States;
- facilitate access to resources in all types of libraries for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry;
- encourage resource sharing among all types of libraries for the purpose of achieving economical and efficient delivery of library services to the public;
- promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning and to enhance and expand the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources relating to workforce development, 21st century skills, and digital literacy skills;
- enhance the skills of the current library workforce and to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services;
- ensure the preservation of knowledge and library collections in all formats and to enable libraries to serve their communities during disasters;
- enhance the role of libraries within the information infrastructure of the United States in order to support research, education, and innovation; and
- promote library services that provide users with access to information through national, state, local, regional, and international collaborations and networks.

With LSTA purposes setting the direction, the following goals were established in Nebraska's Plan:

Goal 1: All Nebraskans will benefit from life-long learning and cultural enrichment delivered through their library programs and services.

Goal 2: Library staff and supporters will have the tools and skills to provide and sustain needed programs and services to their target audiences.

Goal 3: The Nebraska Library Commission will promote library services statewide and collaborate with libraries to effectively market their programs, their services, and their value to the community.

This Plan evaluation will address the IMLS retrospective, process, and methodological questions.

Retrospective Questions

- To what extent did NLC Plan activities make progress towards each goal of the state’s Plan? Where progress towards each goal was not achieved, discuss what factors contributed.
- To what extent did the Plan activities achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?
- Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for your Plan activities?
 - Library workforce (current and future)
 - Individuals living below the poverty line
 - Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed
 - Ethnic or minority populations
 - Immigrants/refugees
 - Individuals with disabilities
 - Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills
 - Families
 - Children (aged 0-5)
 - School-aged youth (aged 6-17)

Process Questions

- How have you used data from the old and new State Program Reports (SPR) and elsewhere to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan?
- Specify any changes made to the Five-Year Plan and why this occurred.
- How and with whom have you shared data from the old and new SPR and from other evaluation resources?

Methodology Questions

- Identify how you implemented an independent Five-Year Evaluation using the criteria described in the section of this guidance document called Selection of Evaluators.
- Describe the types of statistical and qualitative methods (including administrative records) used in conducting the Five-Year Evaluation. Assess their validity and reliability.
- Describe stakeholders involved in the various stages of the Five-Year Plan Evaluation and how you engaged them.
- Discuss how you will share the key findings and recommendations with others.

Focus Group Questions

Focus groups were conducted with three groups to gain information for this report. The groups were the State Advisory Council on Libraries (SACL), Regional Library System Directors, and the Commissioners of the Nebraska Library Commission. Focus groups were asked to address the following questions:

1. What did the Nebraska Library Commission do to support your type of *library's life-long learning efforts*? Can you suggest other things that could have been done?
 2. What did the Nebraska Library Commission do to support your type of *library's cultural enrichment efforts*? Can you suggest other things that could have been done?
 3. Has the Nebraska Library Commission participated in *marketing and promoting the value of Nebraska's libraries*?
 4. Under the current plan, has the Nebraska Library Commission provided your type of library additional *tools* to sustain needed programs and services to your target audiences? Can you suggest other things that could have been done?
-

Evaluation Report

Activities Designed To Help Meet Goal 1

Nebraska Center for the Book
Nebraska eReads
NebraskAccess
Talking Book and Braille Service

Activities Designed to Help Meet Goal 2

Library Improvement through Consultation and Training
Interlibrary Loan and Reference Service
Lender Compensation
Children and Young Adult Library Services
Library Statistical Survey via Bibliostat Collect
Technology Innovation
Statewide Library Improvement Services
Library Improvement Grants

Activities Designed to Help Meet Goal 3

Nebraska Libraries on the Web
NCompass Live
Digital Skills Clusters

A survey was conducted in December 2021 to determine which services Nebraska librarians found most useful. There were 422 responses. The respondents' position in their libraries broke down as follows:

Position	Percent	# of Responses
Director	41.23%	174
School Librarian	47.39%	200
Assistant Director	0.47%	2
Branch Manager	1.42%	6
Children's Librarian	0.24%	1
Reference Librarian	0.00%	0
Technical Services Librarian	0.47%	2
IT Staff	0.24%	1
Library Assistant	0.71%	3
Library Aide	0.47%	2
Other	7.35%	31

Goal 1 Retrospective Question 1

To what extent did the Plan activities make progress towards each goal of the state's Plan? Where progress towards each goal was not achieved, discuss what factors contributed.

Goal 1: *All Nebraskans will benefit from life-long learning and cultural enrichment delivered through their library programs and services.*

Activities Designed To Help Meet Goal 1

Activity 1—Nebraska Center for the Book

The Nebraska Center for the Book (NCB) is a state affiliate of the Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. The Nebraska Library Commission supports the Center's projects, including publications and special events. The Nebraska Center for the Book brings together the state's readers, writers, booksellers, librarians, publishers, printers, educators, and scholars to build the community of the book.

Survey Results:

In the 2021 survey, users were asked to rate the following statement on a scale of very valuable to not valuable at all. There were 357 responses to the following:

Nebraska Center for the Book (NLC provides staff support for NCB activities. The NCB publishes a newsletter, provides Nebraska sponsorship for the Letters About Literature program, hosts the annual Celebration of Nebraska Books event, and the statewide One Book One Nebraska program.)

The rankings were as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
44	85	41	9	1

177 reported that they did not participate in the service. Out of the 180 users that provided rankings, 94% rated the service somewhat-to-very valuable. Additionally, users were asked to respond to the following question:

Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library. Out of 336 responses, the Nebraska Center for the Book was ranked as follows:

1st	1
2 nd	1
3 rd	5
4 th	6
5 th	8

Findings

As a result of the Nebraska Center for the Book programs and projects, thousands of Nebraskans have gained awareness and appreciation of books and writing. Nebraskans have learned about authors, writing, books, publishing, information, and ideas focused on Nebraska. In association with Nebraska Center for the Book activities, the Library Commission has a growing collection of books for lending through libraries for local book club groups and book discussions. The NCB's One Book One Nebraska (OBON) program each year selects a book to promote for children, teens, and adults. OBON related activities have involved numerous presentations throughout the state, readings of the selected book, and growth in reading awareness and interest. Humanities Nebraska and other organizations are valued and effective partners in supporting Nebraska Center for the Book activities and events.

In answer to question #1, all three groups listed NCB and its One Book One Nebraska program as contributing to the life-long learning effort.

In answer to question #2, all three groups included NCB as contributing to NLC's cultural enrichment goal.

Activity 2—Nebraska eReads/OverDrive

Nebraska eReads/OverDrive is a collaborative project among the Nebraska Library Commission and 187 public libraries to jointly purchase and loan eBooks and digital audiobooks. The Nebraska eReads/OverDrive library consortium loaned nearly 910,000 digital titles in 2020. The consortium libraries set policies and collaborate on purchase decisions.

Survey Results:

In the 2021 survey, users were asked to rate the following statement on a scale of very valuable to not valuable at all. There were 359 user responses to the following:

OverDrive Libraries Group consortium (also known as eReads, provides a shared collection of eBooks, Audiobooks, e-periodicals, and downloadable video titles for participating libraries)

The rankings are as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
173	38	14	4	0

130 reported that they did not participate in the service. Out of the 229 users that provided rankings, 98% rated the service somewhat-to-very valuable. Additionally, users were asked to respond to the following question:

Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library. Out of 336 responses, the OverDrive Libraries group was ranked as follows:

1st	124
2 nd	48
3 rd	22
4 th	14
5 th	5

Findings

Nebraska OverDrive Libraries

The Nebraska OverDrive Libraries consortium includes legally established public libraries meeting minimum criteria. In 2018, the consortium had 173 small to medium-sized public libraries and one school library, and the group increased to 180 libraries by 2020. Any legally established public library meeting the minimum criteria and serving a population of fewer than 100,000 may join the consortium. In addition to the increased number of libraries providing the service, circulation has grown significantly, from 673,130 in 2018 to 910,897 in 2020. Remote services such as OverDrive became more valuable and popular during the pandemic that began in 2020. Most of the participating libraries serve rural areas, and some serve entire counties because they may be in the only town in the county. For example, Arthur County Library, which is located in Arthur, its only town and county seat, serves a population of 434 and covers 718 square miles (60% of the area of Rhode Island).

The vast majority of libraries in the consortium would not be able to afford OverDrive services on their own. Each library contributes funds based on population served with a minimum annual payment of \$500. As a group pooling funds, their customers have access to a much wider variety of eBook and Audiobook titles. LSTA funds help to extend the service and alleviate the waiting times.

The eclectic nature of the collection helps with discovery, cultural enrichment, and lifelong learning. Due to the growing Hispanic population, more Spanish-language content has been purchased. Most eBooks have an option to enlarge the text, aiding those with vision problems. Audiobooks are also often used by patrons with vision impairments.

Commission staff provide the consortium with training, technical support, marketing materials, financial management, and optional authentication services.

Feedback from library staff and customers:

There are a lot of patrons that have retreated from traditional library services and found their entertainment online and through internet services. Overdrive allows us to serve those patrons with print and audio materials, when they would not otherwise be part of our service group. In addition, the electronic nature of Overdrive allows us to maintain collections of books that would otherwise be out of print or have too few circulations for us to maintain them on our shelves. When a patron is insisting that they only thing they want to read is the author Louis L'Amour (like my father), the Overdrive resource allows us to maintain extended collections that might otherwise be too old to keep physically available. Overdrive sells itself as a way to instantly get bestsellers without leaving the house, but for my money, it's the ability to keep specialized books that have small target populations that really makes it worthwhile."

--Mike Burris, Director, Holdrege Public Library

"Our patrons really love to use Overdrive to get ebooks and audiobooks, and they love how many titles there are to choose from. This was especially helpful during the pandemic when we were not able to be open during our regular hours."

--Kimberly Ellenwood, Genoa Public Library

"Overdrive is amazing. I personally use Libby every single day during my commutes to work or picking the kids up from school. We have a lot of patrons that don't physically come into the library but they do use Overdrive for the eBooks or audiobooks. When there's a long waitlist on a title, they will come in to check out the physical copy because it's usually a much shorter wait time. I would say that's the only downside of Overdrive - its popularity!"

--Amy Coffman, Director, Sutherland Public Library

"I appreciate the variety of titles available for listeners and readers. I have found it especially helpful for some readers who need or prefer large type titles. As we all know, LT is sometimes hard to acquire and can be quite pricey. If we're able to teach these users to adjust settings on e-readers, they don't have to miss out on their books!"

--Elisa Cruz, Fremont Public Library

Focus Group Results

Focus group responses from SACL and System Directors listed Nebraska eReads/OverDrive as contributing to the lifelong learning effort.

Activity 3—NebraskAccess

NLC licenses online databases for access through libraries, schools, and home use. The databases are provided at no cost for Nebraska residents.

Survey Results:

There were 360 responses regarding this service. The rankings were as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
191	100	31	3	0

Thirty-five respondents reported not utilizing the service. Out of the 325 respondents that provided rankings, 99% found the service somewhat-to-very valuable.

Users were also asked to respond to the following question:

Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library. Out of 336 responses, the NebraskAccess was ranked as follows:

1st	92
2 nd	54
3 rd	31
4 th	33
5 th	22

Findings

NebraskAccess for LSTA 5-year plan evaluation

Through the NebraskAccess portal, Nebraska residents are provided with links to recommended sites on a variety of topics, FAQs on Nebraska topics, and licensed online databases. The Nebraska Library Commission licenses the online databases for access through libraries, schools, and home use. The databases are provided free of charge to Nebraska residents; State and LSTA funds are used to pay for the licenses. NebraskAccess includes the following databases: EBSCO's MasterFILE, MyHeritage Library Edition, Legal Information Reference Center, Consumer Health Complete, Small Business Reference Center, Biography Reference Bank, Biography Reference Center, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection, Science and Technology Collection, NoveList Plus, NoveList K-8 Plus, Points of View Reference Center, Primary Search, and Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia, along with the OCLC FirstSearch Basic Database Package, including OCLC WorldCat.

The databases provide a wide range of content to Nebraskans from elementary school to adult level. With encyclopedias and full-text magazines and journals for K-12 students, an added benefit of the Commission's licenses is that all schools are able to meet the Nebraska Department of Education's Rule 10 (accreditation) requirement for access to these specific resources without having to individually subscribe to such resources. Public libraries no longer need to pay for their own subscriptions to resources such as NoveList and MyHeritage Library Edition. This has helped many libraries with their content budgets. According to information provided by EBSCO, if each public, school, and academic library in the state individually

subscribed to all of its databases provided through the Commission, the cost would be over \$10 million per year; the Commission pays only a small fraction of that amount.

Business and legal database resources help the unemployed/underemployed and those looking to start their own business. People who have medical problems or loved ones with medical problems find help from the health resources. Researchers interested in genealogy have access to more materials.

Commission staff maintain and update information about the databases throughout the NebraskAccess website. This includes links to video tutorials, instructional handouts on using the databases, and customizable marketing material created by Commission staff, as well as links to marketing material and documentation provided by the vendors. Staff also take advantage of various online and in-person opportunities to speak with groups of librarians about the databases. These interactions range from brief introductions to the NebraskAccess program to in-depth training on one or more databases.

Commission staff also provide support for database access and authentication. This involves updating and distributing new passwords to each participating institution twice a year, as well as updating IP addresses and troubleshooting authentication issues as they occur. Staff monitor the databases and regularly interact with vendor technical support personnel, account executives, and product specialists to address database functionality and performance.

Focus Group Results

Of the three focus groups conducted (NLC Commissioners, the State Advisory Council on Libraries, and the Regional Library System Directors), all groups reported NebraskAccess as a valuable service for the life-long learning effort and a valuable tool for the state’s libraries.

Activity 4—Talking Book and Braille Service

The Talking Book and Braille Service (TBBS) provides free books and magazines on digital cartridges, cassette, online, and in Braille to individuals with a visual or physical condition or a reading disability, which limits use of regular print.

There were 358 survey responses regarding this service. The rankings were as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
64	46	18	6	0

224 reported not participating in this service. Of the 134 that provided rankings, 96% of those responding found the service somewhat-to-very valuable. Users were asked to respond to the following question:

Please rank five program/services in which you’ve participated that have had the greatest impact on your library. Out of 336 responses, the Talking Book and Braille Service was ranked as follows:

1st	3
2 nd	3
3 rd	10
4 th	2
5 th	9

Focus Group Results

The State Advisory Council on Libraries focus group included TBBS as a life-long learning effort supported by the NLC. It must be noted that Talking Book and Braille Service is not an in-library service. It is a service provided to users directly in their homes therefore having minimal impact on libraries. With that in mind, the following customer comments help add understanding regarding the importance of the service.

TBBS Testimonials:

"Thank you for the many years you provided my dad with books. He did not enjoy radio or TV, but he did love his talking books! He listened to them from morning till he went to bed at night. Thank you for all you do."

"Just a note of thanks for the compassionate, proactive service for our son... He has been a consistent auditory reader of your resources since his... teacher...recommended your resources...He used your services even more during COVID. Please know we appreciate all you do."

"Please continue to send selections. This is a wonderful service."

"I wanted to thank you for your services. The Talking Books Program made a huge, positive impact on my Dad's life. It provided him with entertainment & purpose when he lost the ability to play games or watch T.V. He loved talking about the books he was listening to and I truly believe this program extended his life, allowing him to reach other milestones like meeting his first grandchild! We are so grateful, thank you again."

"Thank you! ...You guys are the best. We appreciate your service & dedication so much!"

Findings

Talking Book and Braille Service for LSTA 5-year plan evaluation

TBBS provides free accessible books and magazines to borrowers who have visual impairments or reading disabilities. TBBS supplements the Braille, cassette, digital cartridge, and Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) materials from the Library of Congress with locally-recorded books and magazines. TBBS also collaborates with schools and other facilities in providing materials to their clients who have organic reading disabilities.

The entire digital collection is now in the cloud and accessible via BARD and Duplication on Demand (DOD). NLC's TBBS uses the national digital collection, which includes all books produced by National Library Service (NLS), commercial book publishers, and other network libraries. They also provide a locally produced collection (e.g. books recorded in TBBS studios) which supplements the larger national collection. These locally produced books are added to the national collection through an upload portal via a NLS website. Since summer 2019, NLC's TBBS increased the amount of books that have been uploaded to be part of the national collection from 4 to 35.

Listed above are the four primary activities engaged in by the Nebraska Library Commission using federal funds to meet the intent of Goal 1. Our next question is to what extent does the Five-Year Plan achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?

Goal 1 Retrospective Question 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?

Measuring Success Focal Areas:

Lifelong Learning: These activities can range from the provision of instructional information resources to direct instructional services delivered by libraries or in partnership with local entities with the goal of transferring knowledge or skills to advance educational aims.

Human Services: These activities can range from the provision of instructional information resources to direct services; however, these activities are focused on providing resources to remediate social problems and improve participants' quality of life.

Employment and Economic Development: These activities address economic needs of individuals and communities.

None of the activities engaged in under Goal 1 directly addressed this particular focal area. This area will be more directly addressed under Goal 2.

Information Access: (This focal area encompasses two former focal areas: Digitization and database services.) These activities broaden public access to content through the purchase or original development of information resources (e.g., databases, computer technology).

Under Goal 2 we will deal with technology innovation which more directly addresses this focal area.

Library Capacity Building: These activities aim at modernizing existing libraries and/or supporting the development of sound policies, organizational structures, and effective methods of management and revenue development in order to improve the efficiency of library services. *Under Goal 2 we will deal with Statewide Library Improvement Services, Library Improvement through Consultation and Training, Interlibrary Loan and Reference Service, Children and Young Adult Library Services, and Library Statistical Survey via Bibliostat Collect which more directly address this focal area.*

Categorize Goal 1 as either 1) achieved, 2) partly achieved, or 3) not achieved

Summary, Goal 1: *"All Nebraskans will benefit from life-long learning and cultural enrichment delivered through their library programs and services."* As an aspirational goal, it is unlikely that all Nebraskans will benefit from life-long learning and cultural enrichment from their local library except to the extent that all Nebraskans benefit from a well-informed citizenry which local libraries support. Activities associated with this goal met with high levels of success and were ranked highly by Nebraska's library practitioners. The NLC provides significant support for achieving this goal but in the end, this goal was and in reality can only be **PARTIALLY ACHIEVED**. It is recognized that this is an ongoing, high-level Goal.

Activity 1 — Nebraska Center for the Book: Based on survey results, findings and focus group responses, this activity achieved the aim of Goal 1.

Activity 2 — Nebraska eReads/Overdrive: Because of the number of libraries participating in this program, the scope of the program statewide, the number of items circulated and the focus group results, this activity achieved the aim of Goal 1.

Activity 3 — NebraskaAccess: This activity has features that contribute to the aims of both Goal 1 and Goal 2. Regarding Goal 1, the breadth of resources provided achieves the intent of Goal 1. The achievement is emphasized by the testimonies of users and the opinions expressed by the focus groups.

Activity 4 — Talking Book and Braille Service: Survey results, focus group results, testimonials and findings all demonstrate clearly that this activity contributed strongly to achieving Goal 1.

Goal 2 Retrospective Question 1

To what extent did the Plan activities make progress towards each goal of the state's Plan? Where progress towards each goal was not achieved, discuss what factors contributed.

Goal 2: Library staff and supporters will have the tools and skills to provide and sustain needed programs and services to their target audiences.

Activities Designed To Help Meet Goal 2

Activity 1—Library Improvement through Consultation and Training

Nebraska's regional library Systems are full partners with the Nebraska Library Commission in its efforts to develop and improve library services statewide. *This partnership is reflected in the written agreement between the Commission and the Systems which lays out the following purposes of that document: To provide a mechanism for development of cooperative programs among libraries and communities to address library service needs; to work with the Commission and libraries to improve local and regional service development; and to promote and enhance libraries and library services within the regional library development.* The expectation for these services is collaborative planning with the Nebraska Library Commission to achieve effective use of resources. The obligation portion of the agreement between the Nebraska Library Commission and the Systems states that each System will offer training, consultation, promotion, and development in the following areas:

- Strategic planning
- Public library accreditation
- Librarian and library board certification
- Children and young adult services
- Technology development
- State's eBook collaborative
- Open-source Pioneer Consortium (ILS)
- Statewide databases
- Personnel management training
- Multicultural/diversity training
- Basic Skills classes
- Services to the blind/visually impaired
- Other Commission initiatives

These activities fall under Goal 2 of the Commission’s long-range plan: *Library staff and supporters will have the tools and skills to provide and sustain needed programs and services to their target audiences.* This goal responds to the LSTA priority: *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.*

Finally, the efforts of this project respond to the LSTA purposes of promoting continuous improvement in library services in all types of libraries in order to better serve the people of the United States; promote literacy, education and lifelong learning and to enhance and expand the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources related to 21st century skills, and digital literacy skills; and enhance the role of libraries within the information infrastructure of the United States. The agreement between the Nebraska Library Commission and the Systems ensures that efforts on the part of System staff and boards will focus on improving library services in response to community needs. Formal and informal training as well as consultation and drop-in services offer response to both recognized and unrecognized needs on the part of library staff and boards.

Survey Results

The following statement was related to this activity: *Regional Library Systems (Four systems were funded in part with LSTA Funds. Services include consulting, continuing education, newsletters, book kits, and cooperative purchasing opportunities).*

There were 361 responses to this service. The rankings are as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
143	80	21	6	0

111 reported that they did not participate in the service. Ninety-seven percent of the 250 users evaluating this service considered it to be somewhat-to-very valuable.

Users were asked to do the following: *Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library.*

Out of 336 responses, Activity 1, under the survey category—Regional Library Systems—were ranked as follows:

1st	19
2 nd	40
3 rd	34
4 th	26
5 th	18

Findings

Service plans, required under the agreement between the Commission and each System, are crafted to respond to LSTA purposes, LSTA Grants to States priorities, and goals in Nebraska's LSTA Five-Year Plan. Shared initiatives and activities (including training on and review of community needs response plans that

are required in order for a Nebraska public library to be accredited) help ensure that local libraries are on track with direction being set by the Nebraska Library Commission.

The Regional Systems have helped the Commission in its mission of “[t]he statewide promotion, development and coordination of library services.”

Activity 2—Interlibrary Loan and Reference Service

Through this service, patrons have access to interlibrary loan materials and reference services through their local public or school library. The Library Commission supports libraries by providing reference and interlibrary loan services in keeping with the mission of the Library Commission to provide statewide promotion, development, and coordination of library and information services.

The Nebraska Library Commission receives testimonials from librarians, teachers, students and the public describing the value of interlibrary loan service. While not new and “trendy,” interlibrary loan remains a beneficial service to many. Interlibrary loan is often a difference maker for those receiving library resources via loan transactions. Teachers, students, and school librarians are among those who have described how interlibrary loan has enabled completion of an assignment or helped in gaining a competitive college admission. Others have indicated a result of obtaining necessary information to start a business or complete a work activity.

Survey Results:

The following statement was related to this activity.

Interlibrary Loan and Reference Services (Book club kits, coordinating library resource sharing, loaning of material from the NLC collection, answering reference questions.)

There were 363 responses to this service. The rankings are as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
175	56	21	2	1

108 reported not using the service. Out of the 255 respondents, 99% of users evaluating this service considered it to be somewhat-to-very valuable.

Users were asked to do the following: Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library.

Out of 336 responses, activity 2 ranked:

1st	31
2 nd	55
3 rd	36
4 th	27
5 th	21

Findings - Interlibrary Loan, Reference Services, and Book Clubs:

The Commission provides Interlibrary Loan (ILL) to libraries in Nebraska that don't have the budget or staff to provide this service locally. This allows even the smallest public libraries and school libraries to meet the needs of their patrons by providing ILL items that allow them to do everything from serious research to keeping up on their favorite series. In times of diminishing acquisition budgets, this helps libraries that can't afford to buy every book their patrons want. School libraries use ILL to obtain books in languages other than English to help teach students whose first language is not English. School libraries also use ILL services to obtain multiple copies of books for class use, as well as books for research papers.

The Commission also provides ILL services for Nebraska state government agencies, which allows them more flexibility with their journal subscription decisions, as well as access to up-to-the minute, mission-critical information. State agencies use ILL services to keep up on the latest general research in their field, to find out more about recent discoveries in their field, and to do research for a variety of proposals, projects, and problem-solving.

In 2006, the Library Commission started collecting multiple copies of books to serve as Book Club Kits to be loaned to libraries and media centers in the state. Today there are more than 2,000 titles in the collection (over 20,000 physical items), including elementary and young adult titles, classics, graphic novels, bestsellers, and several Nebraska authors. A prime motivation for creating this collection was to assist with Interlibrary Loan requests for multiple copies. The NLC collection makes providing copies to groups easier and more convenient; one place to request copies and one place to return them rather than individual copies to multiple libraries. Book Club circulation was 14,439 in 2018, 17,482 in 2019, but declined to 14,285 in 2020 as the pandemic affected in-person group meetings. Commission staff use ILL and book club kits, along with a wiki that helps other libraries who want to resource-share their book club kits, to facilitate book club groups at school, public, and academic libraries. Book club groups reinforce the status and use of libraries in the community as an important part of the fabric of society.

Interlibrary Loan Testimonials:

"ILL is wonderful for small libraries. We just don't have room for all the books our patrons want. This way everyone is happy!"

--Donna Hamilton, Orchard Public

"We depend on Interlibrary Loans here at Sargent Public Schools! We utilize this service for both fiction books and nonfiction books when students are working on research projects. Our students come to understand that they can borrow the book of their choice whether we have it or not. This service is irreplaceable!"

--Kina Stefka, Media Specialist, Sargent Public Schools

"The public utilizes the Interlibrary Loan service frequently for more obscure books or books to fill in a series they are reading digitally. We have also used the ILL service for the past three years to acquire books for students doing their History Day projects. The staff are always extremely helpful and friendly during any interaction and if I am stuck, they always have a plan! We are so lucky to have these services available to us."

--Audrey Heil, Director, Loup City Public Library

"This school year I have used Interlibrary loan regularly. Our preschool teachers found weekly character lessons using picture books and have needed 2 copies per week. Being a small school library, I have not had very many of the requested titles, but have been able to support what they

are doing by using interlibrary loan. ILL has given me the opportunity to get multiple copies, as well. This has been an invaluable resource for them, and me, without having to purchase the resources needed for a new program all at once."

--Alicia Lassen, Overton Public School

"Our little library in Sutherland is only open three days a week, but I use NLC every single day that we're open. I use ILL all the time because if a title isn't on our shelf, I don't want to turn people away. I want to get that title to them and using ILL through the Commission is always fast and easy. If they have any questions, they call and/or email me within a couple of hours of placing the ILL request. It helps our little library extend well beyond our doors so we can service our community better."

--Amy Coffman, Director, Sutherland Public Library

"As we have a small library with a small budget, there is no way we can carry all of the books that our patrons desire. Being able to interlibrary loan books from other libraries helps us to better serve our patrons."

--Kimberly Ellenwood, Genoa Public Library

Book Club/Sets Testimonials:

"The Loup City Public Library utilizes the Book Club kits each month. We have a very active and long-standing book club. This would not be possible without the Nebraska Library Commission's book club kits. We do not have a local bookstore. Our nearest new bookstore is 45 minutes away and they would need to order in all of the books which would be prohibitive in time and money."

--Audrey Heil, Director, Loup City Public Library

"I appreciate the variety of titles available for listeners and readers. I have found it especially helpful for some readers who need or prefer large type titles. As we all know, LT is sometimes hard to acquire and can be quite pricey. If we're able to teach these users to adjust settings on e-readers, they don't have to miss out on their books!"

--Elisa Cruz, Fremont Public Library

"Our patrons love how easy it is to get books for the book club, and they appreciate the variety available."

--Kimberly Ellenwood, Genoa Public Library

"With our small budgets, we rely on the Nebraska Library Commission to provide class sets of popular and newer books to teachers who request them for their reading groups. Without this service, student reading would be limited to our older collections. Thank you so much."

--Nancy Oerter, Librarian, Hawthorne, Lincoln and Watson Elementary Schools, Hastings

"We have borrowed book sets from the Nebraska Library Commission; it is a wonderful resource! I am grateful we have this option in instances where teachers want to do a novel study on a particular book, and we don't have enough resources in our school system!"

--Lynn Stewart, Librarian, Meadowlark Elementary School, Kearney

Activity 3—Lender Compensation

Lender Compensation provides partial reimbursement to libraries for loaning resources to other Nebraska libraries. Lender compensation supports sharing of resources for the benefit of people throughout Nebraska. All libraries profit from resource sharing, and people living in rural communities are assured access to resources that may be lacking in their community libraries with limited collections.

Survey Results:

Users were asked to respond to the following statement.

Lender Compensation (Partial reimbursement to libraries for loaning resources to other Nebraska libraries.)

There were 359 responses to this service. Their rankings are as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
47	31	13	2	0

266 reported not using the service. Out of the 93 respondents, 98% of users evaluating this service considered it to be somewhat-to-very valuable.

Users were asked to do the following: *Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library.*

Out of 336 responses, activity 4 ranked:

1st	2
2 nd	3
3 rd	9
4 th	11
5 th	6

Activity 4—Children and Young Adult Library Services

Children and Young Adult Library Services at the Commission is the focal point for the statewide development and improvement of library services for these age groups. The service manifests itself in both more and less-traditional ways, including activities such as Nebraska's statewide, reader-chosen Golden Sower Award; "Read Aloud Nebraska;" the Collaborative Summer Library Program (CSLP); performers' database; Youth Grants for Excellence; book talks at regional System meetings, at library annual conferences, and online; One Book for Kids/Teens program; and consulting on demand.

Survey Results:

Users were asked to evaluate the following statement.

Children & Young Adult Services (Consultations, presentations, workshops, Collaborative Summer Library Program, Youth Grants for Excellence, work with annual book awards, One Book for Nebraska Kids/Teens, etc.)

There were 360 responses. The rankings follow:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
123	81	25	4	1

126 reported not using the service. Ninety-nine percent of users evaluating this service considered it to be somewhat-to-very valuable.

Users were asked to do the following: *Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library.*

Out of 336 responses, the Children & Young Adult Services ranked as follows:

1st	24
2 nd	49
3 rd	55
4 th	32
5 th	28

Activity 5—Library Statistical Survey via Bibliostat Collect

The Nebraska Library Commission licenses Bibliostat Collect software for collection and use of public library statistical data as part of the national public libraries' statistics program in partnership with IMLS. The library data enables librarians and others to prepare peer comparisons, assess trends, and measure performance against benchmarks. The library data contributes to a national file that is available to Congress, policymakers, and the public. The compiled data allows for comparisons and studies to aid in library service planning at local, regional, and state levels. The data also provides the source of peer comparison standards for the public library accreditation program.

Survey Results:

Users were asked to evaluate the following service.

Collection of annual public library statistics through Bibliostat Collect.

There were 359 responses to this service. The evaluations are as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
87	70	28	3	3

168 did not participate in the service. Out of the 191 that ranked the service, 97% of users evaluating this service considered it to be somewhat-to-very valuable.

Users were asked to do the following: *Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library.*

Out of 336 responses, the statistical collection activity was ranked as follows:

1st	6
2 nd	7
3 rd	6
4 th	15
5 th	28

Findings

Nebraska public libraries report the value of the annual collection of statistics through the IMLS public library survey. Those data, while contributing to national data files, are essential for the Nebraska Library Commission’s accreditation process, and to develop benchmarks for accredited public libraries. The data collection is also beneficial to move unaccredited libraries towards accreditation. Data have also been utilized by individual libraries that are comparing their own programs, services, revenue, and expenditures to similar (peer) library groups. Libraries have also reported the importance of these historical files, to analyze trends and for use in strategic planning, and to provide data visualizations for library stakeholders, the community, and policymakers.

Activity 6—Technology Innovation

The Technology Innovation Librarian schedules and provides sessions to describe and demonstrate technology (hardware and software). The Technology Innovation Librarian is available for personal consultation as well as group consultation, and serves as a resource for state library and regional staff. Ongoing projects include Nebraska Libraries on the Web, makerspace equipment workshops, technology kits for circulation to public and school libraries, digital literacy resources, and tracking digital literacy trends. Among the topics covered in presentations were makerspace planning, website design, library programming in mixed reality, design thinking, and teaching technology in the library. The Technology Innovation Librarian provides on-going advice, courses, and consulting on technology for library applications, and instructional design, as well as providing regular technology presentations via webinars, conferences, and training sessions.

The Technology Innovation Librarian provides consultation and assistance for the Nebraska Libraries on the Web. The Commission hosts websites for 121 libraries and 4 regional library systems. Typical questions that have been responded to include those concerning WordPress, website data tracking, online privacy, and security. During the pandemic, the Technology Innovation Librarian provided technical support and consultation for libraries transitioning from in-person to virtual library services using WordPress and a variety of web-based tools and resources.

Survey Results:

Users were asked to evaluate the following service.

Technology Innovation Programs and services include Tech Kit circulation, Tech Talks, NE Libraries on the Web WordPress workshops and training provided by the Technology Innovation Librarian)

There were 360 responses to this service. The evaluations are as follows:

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
87	68	36	2	2

165 reported not using the service. Out of the 195 that provided rankings, 98% of users evaluating this service considered it to be somewhat-to-very valuable.

Users were asked to do the following: *Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library.*

Out of 336 responses, the Technology Innovation was ranked as follows:

1st	4
2 nd	8
3 rd	13
4 th	17
5 th	14

Activity 7—Statewide Library Improvement Services

Statewide Library Improvement Services provide assistance to libraries of all types and library-related organizations in planning, developing, implementing, and managing library services. It encompasses the work of the continuing education coordinator and works closely with the directors of the state regional library systems. The project also provides advice, information, and training related to the E-rate application process, and weekly webinars provided for library personnel and others on library related issues and topics (*NCompass Live*).

In order to foster library service improvements, Library Commission staff provided information, advice, training, and assistance to library personnel, library trustees, community officials, and regional system staff. Staff also provided training and consultation for public library service improvements associated with the public library accreditation; coordinated the Public Librarian and Public Library Board Certification Programs; provided ongoing consultation services; developed, taught, and coordinated a basic skills program for library staff without the MLS degree; aided in the determination of library scholarships and internships provided through a federal grant; and shared monthly information about online webinars related to library services. LSTA funds were used for a portion of salaries and benefits for library development staff. Statewide Library Improvement Services included continuing consultation with libraries involved in the LSTA-supported Pioneer Consortium, meeting with the consortium governing Council and its officers to help with strategy. Training and advising were significant activities for the library development director and especially related to community needs response planning training for library personnel.

Survey Results

This activity was addressed in several survey questions addressed to users. The following statement was related to this activity.

358 users evaluated the statement as follows:

Library Development Services (Provides information, advice and assistance to library personnel, library trustees, and community officials, administers library accreditation guidelines, provides Basic Skills classes, and opportunities to earn continuing education credits, coordinates the Librarian Certification Program and the Board Certification Program).

Very Valuable	Valuable	Somewhat Valuable	Not Very Valuable	Not At All Valuable
118	81	20	0	0

139 reported not utilizing the service. Of the 219 respondents, 100% of users evaluating this service considered it to be somewhat-to-very valuable.

Users were also asked to do the following: *Please rank five program/services in which you've participated that have had the greatest impact on your library.*

Out of 336 responses, the Library Development activity was ranked as follows:

1st	12
2 nd	12
3 rd	24
4 th	24
5 th	21

FOCUS GROUPS

Focus Groups highlighted the following library improvement services:

- Technology grants, e.g., LSTA,
- Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP)
- NebraskaAccess training
- GoTo Webinar software
- Book Club kits
- Basic Skills training for library staff
- Strategic planning support and consulting in general
- E-rate training and reminders
- Webinars for boards and staff
- Summer reading program training
- ALA/United for Libraries membership
- Certification and accreditation standards (helpful in getting training for staff)
- Grants and scholarships to attend conferences

- Basic skills classes
- STEM/STEAM
- *NCompass Live*

Goal 2 Retrospective Question 2

Listed above are the seven activities engaged in by the Nebraska Library Commission to meet the intent of Goal 2. Our next question is to what extent does the Five-Year Plan achieve results that address national priorities associated with the Measuring Success focal areas and their corresponding intents?

Measuring Success Focal Areas
Lifelong Learning
Human Services
Employment and Economic Development
Information Access
Library Capacity Building

Categorize Goal 2 as either 1) achieved, 2) partly achieved, or 3) not achieved

Summary, Goal 2: *“Library staff and supporters will have the tools and skills to provide and sustain needed programs and services to their target audiences.”* NLC did an outstanding job in providing local library practitioners with the continuing education and skills development to stay abreast of the ever-changing nature of library services and technology. It is interesting to note, that the achievement of this Goal was supported in an odd way by the pandemic as library practitioners increased their use of and appreciation for the many online learning opportunities that the NLC offers. Given the high use of online learning, the testimonials in its favor and the rankings of the activities engaged in, this Goal was **ACHIEVED.**

Activity 1—Library Improvement through Consultation and Training:

This activity included very specific training programs as detailed. It has contributed directly to the Information Access and Library Capacity Building focal areas and at least secondarily to the other focal areas. The work of the NLC to provide both in person and online training to library practitioners across the state achieves the aims of goal 2.

Activity 2—Interlibrary Loan and Reference Service:

This activity has contributed especially to the focal areas of Lifelong Learning and Information Access. It should be noted that during the five-year period, the service has been in transition. Book Club kits, which the Commission began developing in 2006, have been enlarged and are now circulating over one thousand items per month. They are clearly contributing to these focal areas as well and achieves the aim of Goal 2.

Activity 3—Lender Compensation:

This activity is closely related to Interlibrary Loan. It has never been possible to fully compensate lending libraries for their ILL service, but this project provides some level of assistance. This activity supports the

focal areas of Lifelong Learning and Information Access, and Library Capacity Building to the extent that it enhances “revenue development.” This project partially achieves the aims of Goal 2.

Activity 4—Children and Young Adult Library Services:

This activity enhances Lifelong Learning particularly as it provides “summer reading” and “early literacy initiatives.” The activities aligned with Children and Young Adult Library Services achieves the aim of Goal 2.

Activity 5—Library Statistical Survey via Bibliostat Collect:

This activity enhances Information Access in that it involves a “development . . . activity designed to improve information access. It also adds to Library Capacity Building by contributing to “effective methods of management.” Library Statistical Survey via Bibliostat as evidenced by a strong Very Valuable or Valuable survey response achieves the aim of Goal 2.

Activity 6—Technology Innovation:

This activity contributes to Library Capacity Building by “modernizing existing libraries and/or supporting the development of sound policies, organizational structures, and effective methods of management.” The ongoing support by the NLC to Nebraska’s libraries for technological adaptation and improvement achieves the aim of Goal 2.

Activity 7—Statewide Library Improvement Services:

On the basis of the survey results, the focus group responses and the findings listed under Activity 1 which is closely related to 7, it is apparent that this activity contributed strongly to the Lifelong Learning, Information Access and Library Capacity Building focal areas. Each of these focal areas was enhanced by the various service improvements detailed in this five-year period and achieves the aim of Goal 2.

Retrospective Question 3

Did any of the following groups represent a substantial focus for your Plan activities? (Yes/No)

Library workforce (current and futures)	YES
Individuals living below the poverty line	NO
Individuals that are unemployed/underemployed	NO
Ethnic or minority populations	NO
Immigrants/refugees	NO
Individuals with disabilities	YES
Individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills	NO
Families	YES
Children (aged 0-5)	YES

School-aged youth (aged 6-17)	YES
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For those groups in the above table for whom the answer was “Yes”, to what extent was each group reached?

Library workforce (current and future)

NLC has trained library staff on current and emerging technologies. Commission staff continued weekly *NCompass Live* broadcasts. NLC has provided continuing education opportunities for library staff and board members. The activities listed continued, and the Basic Skills classes were modified to be completely online. NLC has provided consultation services to library directors, staff, and board members. Major changes occurred in this service area with Commission staff and System Directors acting in concert. The biennial agreement with the Systems was revised to emphasize training and consulting services to local libraries including the areas of strategic and community needs response planning, public library accreditation, library board certification, personnel the Commission. This one is “partly achieved,” but will never be fully met because it needs to keep changing all the time.

Individuals with disabilities

This has been done primarily through the Talking Book and Braille Service. The scope of the service is detailed on pages 9-10 of this report.

Families

In addition to a wide variety of resources for children and young adults, NLC provides services for parents including free access to familyeducation[®] with information on everything from pregnancy, kids, teens, school and learning and family life.

Children (aged 0-5) and School-aged youth (aged 6-17)

Children and Young Adult Library Services at the Commission serve as the focal point for the statewide development and improvement of library services for these age groups. The service manifests itself in both more and less-traditional ways, ranging as it does from pre-Kindergarten literacy efforts to wearable technology. Activities include Nebraska's statewide, reader-chosen Golden Sower Award; “Read Aloud Nebraska;” the Collaborative Summer Library Program; performers’ database; Youth Grants for Excellence; book talks at regional System meetings, at library annual conferences, and online; One Book for Kids/Teens program; and consulting on demand.

Goal 3: The Nebraska Library Commission will promote library services statewide and collaborate with libraries to effectively market their programs, their services, and their value to the community.

Activities Designed To Help Meet Goal 3

- Nebraska Libraries on the Web
- NCompass Live
- Digital Skills Clusters

The Nebraska Library Commission supported Goal #3 through various services included in Goal #2. Most specifically, through “Library Improvement through Consultation and Training” and “Technology Innovation.” Within these areas of focus, the following activities took place. In the 2021 survey, users

assessed Library Improvement through Consultation and Training as being ninety-seven percent Valuable to Somewhat Valuable, and Technology Innovation to be nearly ninety-eight percent Valuable to Somewhat Valuable.

Activity 1—Nebraska Libraries on the Web

NLC uses WordPress to host websites for libraries whose staff have little to no experience with website development. This service allows libraries to promote their own services locally. Libraries are offered the opportunity to work with NLC to customize sites specific to their own community or to be trained in the use of the software to develop their own sites. Each library must maintain their site to keep content fresh.

The Technology Innovation Librarian provides ongoing advice and consulting on technology for library applications, as well as providing regular technology presentations via webinars, conferences, and training sessions.

WordPress Testimonials:

"Nebraska Libraries on the web is a great opportunity for libraries to use free and supported websites to provide information to their patrons."

--Tammi Thiem, Regional Library Director, Three Rivers Library System

"We were able to tell Amanda Sweet (Technology Innovation Librarian, NLC) what we wanted for a website design and she put it together for us. There was no cost to Exeter Public Library."

--Cindy Markowski, Co-Director Exeter Public Library

"Amanda Sweet (Technology Innovation Librarian), at the Nebraska Library Commission, did a fantastic job redesigning our website. She listened to my ideas and made them come to life. Amanda has continued to be an invaluable resource as I edit the page to keep it up to date. Without the Library Commission, I would not be able to create such an attractive and patron-friendly site. And it's FREE!"

--Jennifer Norton, Library Director, Lexington Public Library

Activity 2 — NCompass Live

NCompass Live is free and open to anyone to attend, but the audience almost exclusively ends up being library staff. Libraries can use what they learn on *NCompass Live* to then promote their programs and services. Through training, they can learn how to effectively market their programs, services, and value to the community by seeing what other libraries are doing (successes and challenges) and then emulate or adopt those things in their own communities.

Activity 3 — Digital Skills Clusters

In service to Goal #3's efforts to "collaborate with libraries to effectively market their programs, their services, and their value to the community" the Nebraska Library Commission, through the Technology Innovation Librarian, offers courses to librarians called "Digital Skills Clusters." The Digital Skill Clusters are a set of public-facing adult learning resources, including information articles, tutorials, and support resources. Digital Skill Categories include Job-Seeker Support, Parenting & Technology, Computers & Devices for Beginners, Online Banking & Finance, and more. Communities everywhere have an increased need for these resources, while most libraries lack the time and/or staffing to gather the resources across so many categories. Resources are available to libraries as a Google Doc to pull select resources as needed, or as a WordPress template to make all categories publicly available on the library website. As communities learn which resources are available to them, interest is piqued, and opportunities grow.

Making these resources available to library staff and their communities is an entry-level step in ongoing Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Support efforts statewide. Libraries are encouraged to take the next step to build partnerships with local organizations to bolster services in the most relevant Digital Skills Categories. Libraries can then offer warm referrals to local and state organizations, bring in relevant guest speakers, offer workshops, introductory training opportunities using Digital Skill Cluster resources, improve collection development, and more. For example, Kilgore Memorial Library in York, NE is currently researching the local Workforce Development partnership structure to uncover new ways for the library to support job seekers and local businesses. The Innovation Librarian is consulting on the process to help York uncover new opportunities. The Digital Skills Clusters are a brainstorming tool and launching pad for Digital Skills-related services in York and other communities across the state.

Categorize Goal 3 as either 1) achieved, 2) partly achieved, or 3) not achieved

Summary, Goal 3: *“The Nebraska Library Commission will promote library services statewide and collaborate with libraries to effectively market their programs, their services, and their value to the community.”* The NLC provided important and much needed marketing support for their library practitioners. This was especially important for small and rural library practitioners with little marketing skills and knowledge about marketing technology. Through training, the provision of universal templates for program and services, and a cost benefit analysis for libraries used throughout the state, this Goal was **ACHIEVED**.

Activity 1—Nebraska Libraries on the Web: Nebraska is a very rural state and many of the library practitioners do not have sophisticated skills for website development. The NLC’s provision of WordPress and the attendant skill support by NLC staff achieves the aim of Goal 3.

Activity 2 – NCompass Live: Though this online learning service is developed for the use by all Nebraskans, it has been heavily used by Nebraska library practitioners to learn to effectively market their library services to their own communities and thus achieves the aim of Goal 3.

Activity 3 — Digital Skills Clusters: Making these resources available to library staff and their communities is an entry-level step in ongoing Digital Literacy and Workforce Development Support efforts statewide. Libraries are encouraged to take the next step to build partnerships with local organizations to bolster services in the most relevant Digital Skills Categories. Both local collaboration and provision and promotion of Digital Skills by local libraries achieves the aim of Goal 3.

Methodology Questions

1. Identify how you implemented an independent Plan Evaluation using the criteria described in the section of this guidance document called Selection of Evaluators.

The evaluator must be able to demonstrate professional competency to rigorously conduct the evaluation, including requisite expertise in statistical and qualitative research methods.

The evaluator selected for this project is Sally G. Reed. Reed has over 20 years in Public Library administration and 15 years as the former director of Friends of Libraries USA, now United for Libraries, a division of the American Library Association. She has published 15 professional books on library management, planning, marketing and promotion, working with Friends, Trustees and Volunteers. She has consulted with libraries in 48 states and worldwide. This consulting work included significant library planning using statistical and qualitative research methods.

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

Information sources used in preparation for this report included annual State Program Reports prepared by NLC, annual reports published in the NCompass Newsletter and a survey of 422 users of Nebraska Library Commission services including public and academic library administrators, school librarians, and information technology managers among others. Also used were reports including evaluations and statistics from NLC department directors. All reports were prepared according to standard administrative requirements set by the state of Nebraska. The survey was prepared using Survey Monkey and used conventional and qualitative methods available through that service.

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

Focus groups were conducted with the State Advisory Council on Libraries, with Regional Library System Directors, and with the Nebraska Library Commissioners. Incorporated also are responses from users of the various services such as Interlibrary Loan and Book Clubs, Nebraska eReads/Overdrive, NebraskaAccess, and Talking Book and Braille Service.

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

Data will be included in the Library Commission's annual and biennial reports. The reports include coverage of the Commission's various programs and services. Reports will be disseminated in print versions and will be accessible electronically from the Commission's website. The findings and recommendations will be broadly disseminated to target audiences – libraries, public officials (state and federal), advisory groups, library trustees, newspapers, etc.

5. Discuss how the NLC has used data from the old and new State Program Reports (SPR) and elsewhere to guide activities included in the Five-Year Plan?

Use of the SPR and other sources is an ongoing practice to guide activities and programs. Discussion of activity data is included in Commissioner bi-monthly meetings as well as in the thrice-yearly meetings of the State Advisory Council on Libraries. In addition, SPR reporting (including qualitative and quantitative data) are used to inform budgets, staffing, future programs, and future services.

Furthermore, the Commission publishes an annual report that is distributed and accessible on the Commission's website. The Commission also publishes a biennial report as required by state statute. Both reports cover the Commission's programs, services, and activities. Program and service data is provided in both of these reports. The information and data the Commission collects provides performance indicators and benchmarks that are valuable for decisions related to the management of programs and services.

6. Specify any changes made to the Five-Year Plan and why this occurred.

No changes were made to the Five-Year plan.

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

Reports (including current and historical SPR data and other evaluation resources) are disseminated in print format and are freely accessible from the Commission's website. While the reports are broadly available on the Commission's website, targeted audiences are also included, such as libraries (public and school), public

officials (state and federal, and including members of the Nebraska Legislature and their staff), media sources, advisory groups, and library board and trustee members.

APPENDICES

Crosswalk of State Goals & Activities with IMLS Purposes

Overall Purposes of LSTA (20 U.S.C. § 9121):

1. Enhance coordination among federal programs that relate to library and information services;
2. Promote continuous improvement in library services in all types of libraries in order to better serve the people of the United States;
3. Facilitate access to resources in all types of libraries for the purpose of cultivating an educated and informed citizenry;
4. Encourage resource sharing among all types of libraries for the purpose of achieving economical and efficient delivery of library services to the public;
5. Promote literacy, education, and lifelong learning and to enhance and expand the services and resources provided by libraries, including those services and resources relating to workforce development, 21st century skills, and digital literacy skills;
6. Enhance the skills of the current library workforce and to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services;
7. Ensure the preservation of knowledge and library collections in all formats and to enable libraries to serve their communities during disasters;
8. Enhance the role of libraries within the information infrastructure of the United States in order to support research, education, and innovation;
9. Promote library services that provide users with access to information through national, state, local, regional, and international collaborations and networks.

State Goals and Activities	IMLS Purpose
Goal 1: All Nebraskans will benefit from life-long learning and cultural enrichment delivered through their library programs and services.	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9
Activity 1: Nebraska Center for the Book	5, 8, 9
Activity 2: Nebraska eReads	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9
Activity 3: NebraskAccess	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9
Activity 4: Talking Book and Braille Service	2, 3, 5, 9
Goal 2: Library staff and supporters will have the tools and skills to provide and sustain needed programs and services to their target audiences.	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Activity 1: Library Improvement through Consultation and Training	2, 5, 6, 8,
Activity 2: Interlibrary Loan and Reference Service	2, 3, 4, 8, 9

Activity 3: Lender Compensation	3, 4, 8, 9
Activity 4: Children and Young Adult Library Services	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9
Activity 5: Library Statistical Survey via Bibliostat Collect	2
Activity 6: Technology Innovation	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9
Activity 7: Statewide Library Improvement Services	2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9
Goal 3: The Nebraska Library Commission will promote library services statewide and collaborate with libraries to effectively market their programs, their services, and their value to the community.	2,3, 5, 6, 7, 9
Activity 1: Nebraska Libraries on the Web	2, 3, 5, 6, 9
Activity 2: NCompass Live	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9
Activity 3: Digital Skills Clusters	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9

Crosswalk of State Goals & Activities with IMLS Priorities

1. Expand services for learning and access to information and educational resources in a variety of formats, in all types of libraries, for individuals of all ages in order to support such individuals' needs for education, lifelong learning, workforce development, and digital literacy skills;
2. Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improved coordination among and between libraries and entities for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services;
3. 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;
4. Enhance efforts to recruit future professionals to the field of library and information services;
5. Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies and community-based organizations;
6. Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;
7. 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 section 9902(2) of title 42) applicable to a family of the size involved;
8. Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks; and
9. Carry out other activities consistent with the purposes set forth in section 9121, as described in the SLAA's plan.

Regional Library System - Purpose & Directors

The Nebraska Regional Library Systems consist of four non-profit corporations governed by boards representative of libraries and citizens in the region. The four systems were established to provide access to improved library services through the cooperation of all types of libraries and media centers within the counties included in each System area. Each system offers a variety of services such as regular newsletters, meetings of library staff, workshops, consulting, and planning reflective of the needs within the region. The systems help the Nebraska Library Commission meet its goals on a more localized level.

Current System Directors:

Denise Harders

Central Plains Library System

Scott Childers

Southeast Library System

Tammi Thiem

Three Rivers Library System

Cindy Osborne

Western Library System

Focus Group Questions and Responses

Regional Library Directors, November 16, 2021

Notes from Regional Library System Directors' Focus Group

1. What did the Nebraska Library Commission do to support your libraries' *life-long learning efforts*?

- Webinars for boards and staff
- Summer reading program training
- American Library Association – United for Libraries membership
- Cataloging help and classes
- Certification and accreditation standards (helpful in getting training for staff)
- Strategic planning
- Grants and scholarships to attend conferences
- E-rate help
- Library board training
- Basic skills classes
- *NCompass Live*
- Big Talk From Small Libraries (annual online webinar)
- Workshops provided in rural areas

Suggestions

- Train the trainer for digital technology
- Support and resources to build innovation studios for all libraries

- Help school and public library collaborations
- Additional “train the trainer” help so that libraries can help customers use wi-fi on their own devices

2. What did the Nebraska Library Commission do to support your libraries’ *cultural enrichment efforts*?

- Book Kits – allows smaller libraries to have discussions about literature
- Nebraska Center for the Book
- Nebraska Memories
- One Book One Nebraska

Suggestions

- Program database for good ideas from other libraries that can be replicated
- Getting good speakers inexpensively
- Provide support for other cultural programming in libraries such as dance, music, theater

3. Under the current plan has the Nebraska Library Commission provided your libraries’ additional tools to sustain needed programs and service to your target audiences?

- NebraskAccess databases
- *NCompass Live*
- Summer Reading Program
- Library improvement grants
- Tools to reach “nonusers”
- WebJunction access
- United for Libraries membership – Trustee Academy
- OverDrive
- WordPress
- Marketing templates

Suggestions

- No suggestions were given for this question.

4. Has the Nebraska Library Commission helped provide your library staff, administration, governing board and volunteers with *skills* to provide and sustain your library’s programs and services to your target audiences?

- Basic Skills classes
- Bibliostat
- Big Talk from Small Libraries annual webinar
- Support for children’s and young adults’ programming
- Advocacy with state and federal legislators

- United for Libraries, especially toolkits and Trustee learning

Suggestions

- More “in person” technical training for library staff

5. What did the Nebraska Library Commission do to support your type of libraries’ marketing and promotional efforts?

- WordPress, website development
- Marketing templates
- Social media blogs
- Flyers and posters
- Digital and online classes for marketing

Suggestions

- Statewide marketing plan that could help all libraries

State Advisory Council on Libraries - Purpose & Members

The Nebraska State Advisory Council on Libraries is established by the Nebraska Library Commission to advise the Commission on statewide library development and planning. In addition, the Nebraska State Advisory Council on Libraries will be utilized for:

1. Advice and planning on such other matters on which the Commission may seek counsel.
2. Review and evaluation of interlibrary cooperative and resource sharing plans and programs.
3. Development, review and evaluation of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Plan, consisting of the Basic State Plan, Annual Program, and Long-Range Plan.

Current members:

Cali Biaggi Perkins Library, Doane University, Crete, NE	Scott Childers Southeast Library System, Lincoln, NE
Michael Burris Holdrege Area Public Library	Dixie Codner Central Community College, Grand Island, NE
Jessica Chamberlain Norfolk Public Library	Laura England-Biggs Keene Memorial Library, Fremont NE
Kimberly Endicott Wayne, NE	David Graber Conn Library, Wayne State College
Pat Gross Bayard, NE	Lisa Irwin Youth Rehab & Treatment Center, Kearney, NE
Joy Harvey (NSLA Liaison) Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln, NE	Lori Long Gothenburg Jr/Sr High School
Gail Irwin Ainsworth Public Library	Dana Morgan Leyton High School, Dalton, NE

Emily Nimsakont RStudio, Ashland, NE	Lisa Olivigni Lincoln City Libraries, Eiseley Branch
Stephanie O'Connor Alliance Public Library	Allison Reisig Western Nebraska Community College, Scottsbluff, NE
Sky Seery North Platte Public Library	Rachel Steiner Omaha Public Library
Michael Straatmann University of Nebraska-Lincoln	

State Advisory Council on Libraries' Focus Group

November 18, 2021

1. Under the current plan, has the Nebraska Library Commission provided your type of library additional *tools* to sustain needed programs and services to your target audiences? Can you suggest other things that could have been done?

- Grants
- Webinars to help train staff
- NebraskAccess databases and training
- WordPress
- GoTo Webinar software
- Book repair workshops
- Subject searching of NCompass Live
- Book Club kits
- OverDrive
- Negotiated discounts; state-wide purchasing
- IT trouble shooting
- Strategic and community needs response planning support and consulting in general
- Summer reading materials
- Interlibrary loan
- Nebraska libraries on the web blog
- Opportunity for blogs – target audiences
- Infographics
- Readers Zone

Suggestions

- More Nebraska Innovation Studios

- Financial assistance for occasional face-to-face training and/or conference attendance for first timers
- Additional help in IT troubleshooting
- Training and tools to help with marketing, e.g., digital templates, statewide marketing campaign.

2. What did the Nebraska Library Commission do to support your type of library's *life-long learning efforts*?

- Basic Skills
- Big Talk from Small Libraries
- NCompass Live
- Interlibrary loan, especially for small libraries
- NebraskAccess
- Book Club Kits
- Workshops for school libraries
- Database discounts, training and access

Suggestions

- Make NLC services such as OverDrive available to academic libraries

3. What did the Nebraska Library Commission do to support your type of library's *cultural enrichment efforts*?

- Book Kits – allows smaller libraries to have discussions about literature
- Nebraska Center for the Book
- Nebraska Memories
- Reader Zone
- One Book One Nebraska

Suggestions

- Development of template programs that could be used by smaller libraries
- Develop book tours by authors that local libraries could hook into
- Develop and promote other types of cultural programming for local libraries

4. Under the current plan has the Nebraska Library Commission provided your type of library additional tools to sustain needed programs and service to your target audiences?

- NebraskAccess databases
- Overdrive
- Book Kits
- Discounts
- *NCompass Live*
- Group purchasing

- WebJunction access
- Big Talk for Small Libraries
- United for Libraries membership – Trustee Academy
- WordPress
- Library Advocacy materials
- Nebraska Library Commission website
- Bibliostat

Suggestions

- More support for Maker Spaces
- More Innovation Studios

5. Has the Nebraska Library Commission helped provide your library staff, administration, governing board and volunteers with *skills* to provide and sustain your library's programs and services to your target audiences?

- Basic Skills classes
- E-rate training
- Big Talk From Small Libraries
- Bibliostat (annual collection of library statistics)
- WordPress training and NLC staff setting up library websites
- Digital Clusters
- NCompass Live

Suggestions

- More opportunities for different types of libraries to collaborate
- More marketing courses for librarians
- Advocacy with local leaders and businesses

Nebraska Commission – Purpose & Members

The Nebraska Library Commission was created in 1901 and is part of the executive branch of state government. Per state statute, the Commission is responsible for the statewide promotion, development and coordination of library services. In fulfilling these functions, the Commission works with all types of libraries – public, school, college and university, special and institutional libraries. Some of the Commission's services are provided directly to the public and to state government personnel.

The Library Commission is governed by a six-member board. Commission members are appointed by the Governor for three-year terms. The Commission director is appointed by the six-member Commission. The director is responsible for agency administration and works with Commission staff to carry out programs and services.

The Library Commission, as the state library agency, administers the federal Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) state program in Nebraska. LSTA funds support Library Commission programs and services that address LSTA program purposes and priorities.

Current Library Commissioners:

Vernon J. Davis

Lincoln, NE

Term expires: June 2022

Beth Kabes

Creston, NE

Term expires: June 2024

Arunkumar Pondicherry (Chair)

Lincoln, NE

Term expires: June 2024

Lois Todd-Meyer

Lincoln, NE

Term expires: June 2024

Julia Tye

Kearney, NE

Term expires: June 2022

Kristin Wiebe

Scottsbluff, NE

Term expires: June 2022

Notes from Nebraska Library Commissioners'

Focus Group – November 18, 2021

Note: *The Commission is a high-level policy body whose purpose is to oversee statewide promotion, development and coordination of library services. As such, the Commissioners were not fully aware of all the operational and programmatic services that are offered by the Nebraska Library Commission. Their ability to assess the types of support offered was limited; therefore, the majority of time spent was on a visioning process for future five-year plans.*

1. In what ways did the Nebraska Library Commission support Nebraskan Libraries?

- Grants
- Youth Services
- NLC consulting services
- Regional Support via Regional Libraries
- Online learning Courses
- Basic Skills
- NLC website

2. What is your vision for the Nebraska Library Commission and its services moving forward?

- More in-person training for small libraries (noted that this is costly)
- Continued development of online courses
- Fiber optic cable for school and rural libraries – all libraries
- All staff “digitally” ready – ready to adapt to and adopt continuously changing technology
- More “hand holding” help for rural libraries
- Partnerships with students to increase staff capacity
- Partnerships with local businesses

- More collaboration between school and public libraries
- More marketing for why libraries are still important in the digital age
- More staff training in civic engagement
- More local history programming
- More physical space for the poor and homeless along with digital devices to help bridge digital divide for “have nots”
- More maker spaces to bring in non-users – “librarians as teachers”
- Rural grants focused on partnerships with local expertise
- Promote Nebraska library staff and leadership

3. What do you see as the Commissioners’ greatest challenge moving ahead?

- Succession planning. “We have great leadership at the NLC but we see retirement looming and it’s important to keep good leadership in place.”

LINKS: Samples of Resources and Tools Provided by the Nebraska Library Commission

Goal #1 – Support for life-long learning

- Digital Skills Clusters –
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1geiiKmLQ1UIoRvI2rdwd5bvIPyzwf4p0LOMCCT1rC68/edit>
- NebraskAccess - <http://nebraskaccess.nebraska.gov/>

Goal #2 – Support for Cultural Enrichment

- <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox?projector=1>
- <https://nlc.nebraska.gov/LibAccred/planning.aspx>

Goal #3 - Marketing and the Promotion of the Value of Libraries

- <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/stats/2022Flyer.pdf>
- <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mVcU9IzBNmXCgiUcqhFbPSEebtIaf7Bp-4JK9nLxYGY/edit>
- <https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox?projector=1>
- Engaging Your Community -
<http://nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/calendar/eventshow.asp?ProgID=17526>
- Marketing & Follow-Up: Teaching Technology in the Library Series -
<https://nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/calendar/eventshow.asp?ProgID=20867>
- NCompass Live: Marketing on the Edge - Recorded Online Session
<http://nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/calendar/eventshow.asp?ProgID=11611>
- The Power of Word-of-Mouth Marketing -
<https://nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/calendar/eventshow.asp?ProgID=10520>
- Communication--Getting the Word Out: Does your audience hear what you mean? -
<https://nlc.nebraska.gov/scripts/calendar/eventshow.asp?ProgID=9845>

- Promoting Book Club kits:
- <http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/2022/02/04/bookfacefriday-the-magicians-assistant-by-ann-patchett/>
- <http://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/2022/01/21/bookfacefriday-the-perfume-thief-by-timothy-schaffert/>
- Nebraska Memories:
- <https://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/?s=Throwback+Thursday>
- Government Documents/ The Nebraska Publications Clearinghouse:
- <https://nlcblogs.nebraska.gov/nlcblog/category/whatsupdoc-govdocs/>

List of Acronyms

BARD	Braille and Audio Reading Download
COMMISSION	Nebraska Library Commission
CSLP	Collaborative Summer Library Program
ILL	Interlibrary Loan
IMLS	Institute of Museum and Library Services
LSTA	Library Services and Technology Act
MLS	Master of Library Science (academic degree)
NCB	Nebraska Center for the Book
NLC	Nebraska Library Commission
NLS	National Library Service
OBON	One Book One Nebraska
OCLC	Online Computer Library Center
OPAC	Online Public Access Catalog
SACL	State Advisory Council on Libraries
TBBS	Talking Book and Braille Service