

Library Services and Technology Act
(LSTA)

**Five-Year Plan for Texas
2023–2027**



For submission to the Institute of Museum and Library Services

2022

Texas State Library and Archives Commission
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Introduction

Libraries are dedicated to improving their communities by facilitating learning, supporting knowledge creation, and bringing people together. While libraries have fulfilled these roles since their modern inception, the global pandemic over the last two years emphasized the crucial role libraries play in supporting communities through economic development, improved wellness, civic participation, literacy, education, and digital inclusion.

Libraries remain a vital resource to support Texans' information needs throughout their lives. From early childhood literacy through school, higher education, workforce activities, and beyond, libraries help people succeed. By extension, they help communities and the state and nation work toward a competitive and well-educated population that drives economic opportunity and growth.

Librarians have a long history and impressive record of building capacity for digital access. Libraries are at a time to increase their investment and efforts to build a nationwide infrastructure to support digital equity, inclusion, and literacy. In partnership with other organizations sharing an interest in this new currency for success, libraries are well positioned to be key contributors to strengthen and support this work.

The agency considers these factors, as well as the purposes of the Library Services and Technology Act, as it plans purposeful, effective, and meaningful programs — both continuing and new — for implementation over the next five years. We believe in supporting essential statewide programs that support libraries and library professionals through training and resources. We are committed to providing the greatest number of Texans possible with information and knowledge services that help them lead productive lives.

The Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) is profoundly grateful for the continued support and partnership of the Institute of Museum and Library Services and its support of our efforts to achieve our common objectives. This collaboration has enabled TSLAC to procure resources and design programs and services that could not otherwise be available to the people of this state. We look forward to continuing this work and seeking excellent outcomes for the state and nation.

Mission

The mission of the Texas State Library and Archives Commission is to serve Texans now and into the future by preserving, protecting, and providing access to information and delivering services that enrich their lives. We will accomplish this by:

- Preserving the archival record of Texas for current and future generations;
- Assisting government agencies in the maintenance of their public records;
- Supporting the essential work of libraries in fostering education, opportunity, and lifelong learning; and
- Providing library services to Texans who are unable to read standard print.

Needs Assessment

To assess the information needs of Texans, TSLAC used multiple resources, including the evaluation of the agency's 2018-2022 LSTA five-year plan, a survey of diverse types of Texas libraries, conversations with the agency's commission and staff, and feedback from the TexShare Advisory Board and the Library Systems Act Advisory Board. In addition, TSLAC consulted its own strategic plan and that of the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), state trend information from the state demographer, and the Governor's priorities. These resources informed the development of the plan goals and activities.

The information gathered through these multiple vehicles illustrates continued challenges with four key areas — digital inclusion and broadband access, educational attainment, early childhood literacy, and economic development.

The evaluation of the agency's 2018-2022 LSTA five-year plan showed that TSLAC achieved four of the five goals, while partially achieving the fourth goal — workforce and economic development. These achievements, when paired with the identified information needs for 2023-2027, indicate that the agency's previous goals were and still are in line with Texas needs.

Additional needs that stakeholders consistently voiced included ensuring community cohesion and freedom of access to materials, supporting the impact of non-credentialed librarians, and serving marginalized and diverse communities.

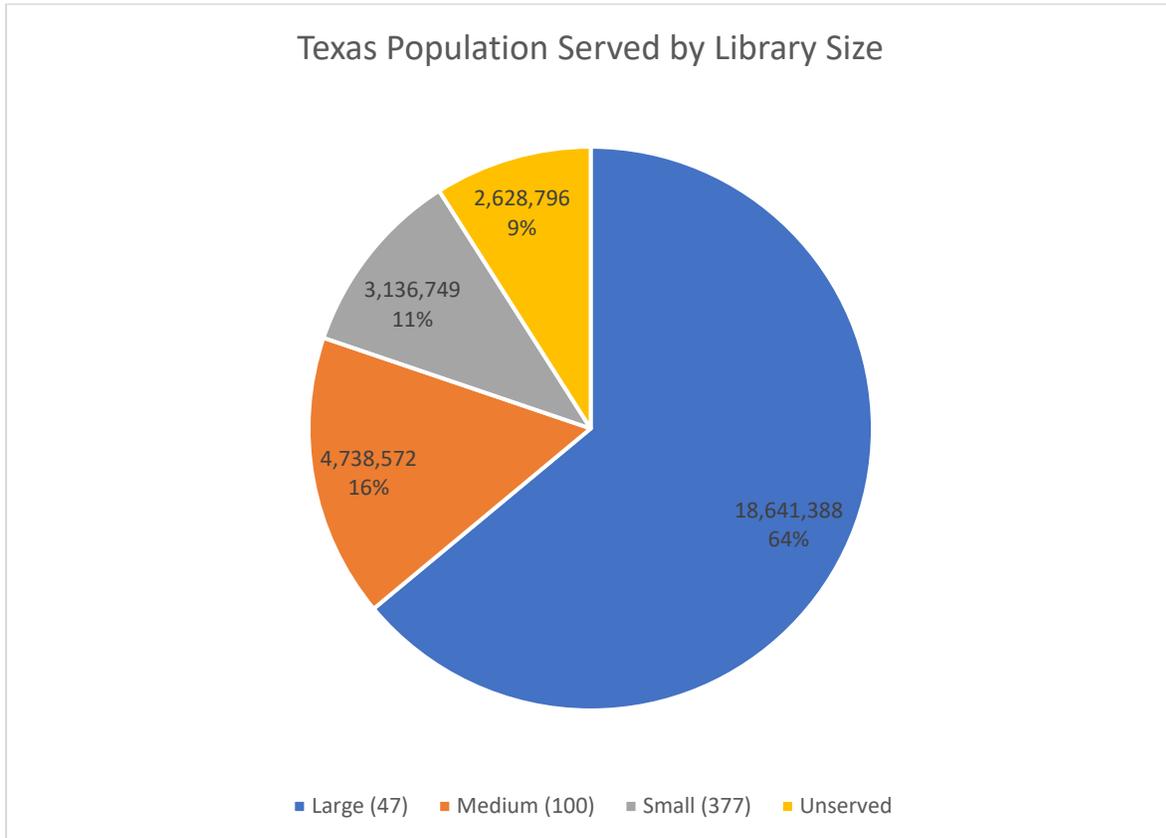
The COVID-19 pandemic identified and amplified the service disparities throughout the state. It highlighted the diverse needs of Texas communities in being digitally inclusive and exposed the service capacity limits of libraries and their communities in meeting those needs. Additionally, the pandemic elevated interest in health and wellbeing to be a major focus for libraries in supporting staff and their constituencies.

To evaluate broadband access, TSLAC conducts its own testing of public libraries. In 2021, the agency conducted a test of Texas public libraries' broadband speeds and found that 33 percent of Texas public libraries met the targets set by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) and the American Library Association (ALA). The test results indicate that approximately two-thirds of Texas public libraries are below national broadband standards for libraries.

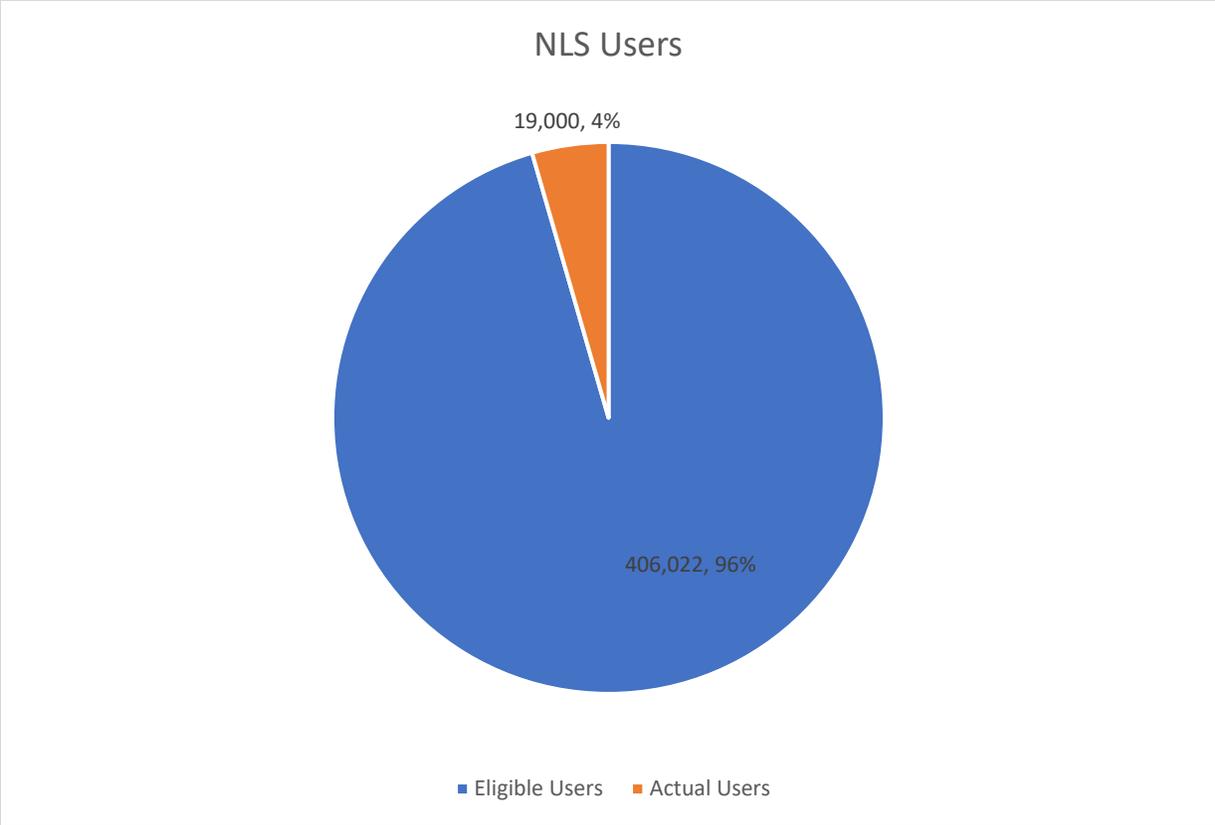
In addition, 18 percent (down 5 percent from 2019) of reporting Texas public libraries did not meet the FCC's minimum definition of broadband for individual households (25 Mbps download). The 82 libraries that did not meet this minimum standard serve over 4 million Texans. Public libraries that provide public computers and Wi-Fi access face greater demands than household networks, requiring faster speeds for patrons to efficiently access distance learning, e-government information, and employment opportunities.

Texas public libraries rank low on most input and output metrics collected by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, such as total support per capita and paid staff. These metrics indicate that Texas public libraries lag in resources to help them address local needs.

As of June 2022, Texas has 524 reporting public libraries that show a strong urban-rural disparity for its 29,145,505 citizens; of these libraries, 504 are accredited. Forty-seven (47) large urban libraries serving populations greater than 100,000 serve approximately 64 percent of the state population, while 377 small libraries serving populations fewer than 25,000 serve approximately 11 percent of the population. Another 2.6 million Texans (9 percent) are not served by any public libraries.



Based on 2020 population estimates and the current formula used by the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS), 406,022 Texas residents are eligible for NLS services. The Talking Book Program currently serves approximately 19,000 residents, or 4.68% of the estimated eligible population. The size of the state, among other factors, makes outreach a challenge. Continuing efforts in this area, along with providing digital access, are critical.



Together, the resources used to identify key state needs for library services indicate that the basic needs and goals from the 2018-2022 five-year plan are still relevant and merit continuing effort. Therefore, library resources and services provided under the new plan will address the following needs:

- Digital inclusion and broadband access;
- Educational attainment;
- Early childhood literacy; and
- Economic development.

Goals (in priority order):

1. **Texans will have access to shared library resources to meet their educational and informational needs.**
2. **Through Texas libraries, Texans will have access to digital resources and services needed to help them navigate the digital information landscape successfully.**
3. **Texans will have access to library materials and services that support literacy and educational attainment, especially early childhood and family literacy, workforce readiness, and lifelong learning.**
4. **Texans will receive library services from trained library staff that effectively respond to community needs.**

Projects by Goal

Goal 1

Texans will have access to shared library resources to meet their educational and informational needs.

Goal 1 leverages state-procured information resources to assist public and academic libraries in providing needed resources throughout the state at a minimal cost to the libraries and no cost to the patrons. The goal also helps libraries make their special collections more accessible to the general population through the creation of finding aids and digitization. Federal funds will assist with all projects listed through funding of staff and/or program costs.

Projects:

TexShare (E-resources and Card)

TexShare provides access to e-resources that support undergraduate and graduate-level higher education, homeschool/after-school learning, and the broad information needs of adult learners. The program supports the training of library staff in the use of these resources and strategies to enable end users to benefit from these resources. The Card program allows direct borrowing by patrons of TexShare libraries at other participating libraries to increase the ways patrons can access shared resources.

TexQuest (E-resources)

TexQuest provides access to e-resources for students and staff at Texas public schools and open enrollment charter schools in support of K-12 education.

Interlibrary Loan (ILL)

The statewide ILL program facilitates sharing library resources by providing statewide access to a consortial ILL system (currently, OCLC Navigator), an online union catalog for participating Texas libraries, and access to a global, centralized ILL system, and access to a statewide consortial catalog.

ILL Reimbursements

Annual reimbursements to public and academic libraries for costs associated with borrowing and lending resources to other members of the consortia encourages the open sharing of resources.

ILL Courier

LSTA funds subsidize the costs of 5, 3, or 2 day a week courier services for TexShare libraries to make sharing resources through ILL more efficient and cost effective.

E-Books

The E-Read Texas program provides library e-books and an e-reader application to Texans with a focus on those served by small community libraries and those in parts of the state not served by public libraries.

Competitive grants (TexTreasures Grant)

TexTreasures grants help libraries make their unique or special collections more accessible for the people of Texas and beyond.

Competitive grants (Regional ILS Cooperative Grant)

This grant program provides funds for programs that establish or enhance cooperative services among libraries. Projects emphasize improved services over a multi-year period.

Archives and Information Services (ARIS) Enhanced Access and Digitization

This project supports activities that provide online access to significant collections and exhibits from the State Archives, including the Texas Digital Archive.

Timeline: Activities under this goal are expected to take place each year of the 2023-2027 Plan.

This goal addresses the following LSTA priorities:

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

Goal 2

Through Texas libraries, Texans will have access to digital resources and services needed to help them navigate the digital information landscape successfully.

This goal will help Texans gain access to broadband or internet services, digital resources and services, and training to use those resources within their communities. Federal funds will assist with all projects listed through funding of staff and/or program costs, which may include vendor contracts and subawards.

Projects:

Technology and Digital Equity

This project supports activities designed to assist public libraries to meet the digital literacy needs of their communities, along with technical assistance and services such as support of library websites for public libraries lacking the resources to support their own, E-rate application support, and library technology consulting and training with a focus on small public libraries to improve their services.

Broadband

This project supports initiatives to enhance library broadband connectivity with an emphasis on public libraries in rural and remote communities that fall below national broadband standards. Support may include training, consulting, and collaborative initiatives with related agencies and community partners.

Talking Book Program

The Talking Book Program (TBP) provides free library services for Texans of any age who are blind or have a visual, physical, or reading disability. LSTA funds will provide increased awareness of and enhanced access to digital content for patrons, including outreach and training, production of digital materials, and content access systems.

Competitive grants (Special Projects)

Special Project grants expand library services to populations with special needs or those having difficulty using the library, with an emphasis on programs focusing on technology and digital inclusion.

Timeline: Activities under this goal are expected to take place each year of the Plan 2023-2027.

This goal addresses the following LSTA priorities:

- Establish or enhance electronic and other linkages and improved coordination among and between libraries and entities, as described in 20 U.S.C. § 9134(b)(6), for the purpose of improving the quality of and access to library and information services;
- 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;
- Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations;
- Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills; and
- 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.

Goal 3

Texans will have access to library materials and services that support literacy and educational attainment, especially early childhood and family literacy, workforce readiness, and lifelong learning.

The services supported by Goal 3 will allow Texans access to information resources and the knowledge to use those resources to be successful personally and professionally. Federal funds will assist with all projects listed through funding of staff and/or program costs either on a statewide basis or through subawards.

Projects:

Youth Services

This project supports activities and programs that promote early childhood, teen, and family literacy, and reading programs in libraries. Initiatives enhance the ability of libraries to address literacy and educational attainment through programming and partnership development. The project also supports eligible Center for the Book programming.

Summer Reading

LSTA funding supports the provision of a free starter kit of materials including a program manual, themed art, access to a selection of summer reading promotional materials, and training so that public libraries across the state can improve the scope and quality of summer reading programs.

Family Place Libraries™

Family Place Libraries™ promotes a national model for transforming public libraries into welcoming, developmentally appropriate early learning environments for young children (ages birth-5 years), their parents, and caregivers. The project provides tuition assistance for training, technical support and networking, and access to grants to equip a library with the equipment needed to meet Family Place Libraries™ criteria.

Workforce Development

This project supports training and resources that enable libraries to meet the workforce readiness needs of all Texans. In particular, the initiative will leverage partnerships with other national, state, and local entities to extend the reach of these programs to achieve a trained workforce.

Competitive grants (Texas Reads)

Texas Reads grants promote reading and literacy programming, such as book talks, English literacy classes, author visits, book clubs, special reading programs, for local communities.

Competitive grants (Special Projects)

Special Project grants expand library services to populations with special needs or those having difficulty using the library, with an emphasis on programs focusing on information skills and access to information resources.

Timeline: Activities under this goal are expected to take place each year of the Plan 2023-2027.

This goal addresses the following LSTA priorities:

- 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;
- Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations;
- Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;
- 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; and
- Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

Goal 4

Texans will receive library services from trained library staff that effectively respond to community needs.

Goal 4 addresses the capacity of libraries to meet the needs of their communities. This goal will support library staff development, expanded services to meet a community need, and community engagement. Federal funds will assist with all projects listed through funding of staff and/or program costs, such as vendor training services, training stipends and scholarships, or subawards to local libraries.

Projects:

Continuing Education and Consulting

The agency's Continuing Education and Consulting (CEC) projects support activities that enhance the ability of all types of libraries to provide responsive services within their communities. Activities may include continuing education on a range of timely professional topics, management training with a focus on small public libraries, specialized library consultations, and activities that strengthen coordination and cooperation among libraries and with libraries and other agencies or community organizations.

Community Engagement and Responsive Services

This project provides training and resources, including partnerships and collaborations with national, state and local entities, to support libraries in addressing community aspirations, equity issues, and community resilience, particularly so that libraries can effectively respond to the needs of underserved and rural populations. This also includes providing benchmarks and best practices to support consistent and data-driven library services that address the broad needs and experiences of the diverse Texas population.

Competitive grants (Special Projects)

Special Project grants expand library services to populations with special needs or those having difficulty using the library, with an emphasis on programs focusing on community engagement or collaboration.

This goal addresses the following LSTA priorities:

- 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;
- Enhance efforts to recruit future professionals, including those from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds to the field of library and information services;
- Develop public and private partnerships with other agencies, tribes, and community-based organizations;
- Target library services to individuals of diverse geographic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, to individuals with disabilities, and to individuals with limited functional literacy or information skills;
- 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; and
- Develop library services that provide all users access to information through local, state, regional, national, and international collaborations and networks.

Crosswalk: TSLAC Goals to IMLS Focal Areas

State Goal	IMLS Focal Area(s)	Associated Project	IMLS Intent
#1 Shared library resources	Information Access	TexShare E-resources and card	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
		Interlibrary loan, courier, and reimbursements	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
		E-Books	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
		Competitive grants (TexTreasures)	Improve users' ability to discover information resources
		Competitive grants (Regional ILS Cooperative Grant)	Improve users' ability to discover information resources
		Archives and Information Services (ARIS) Enhanced Access and Digitization	Improve users' ability to discover information resources
	Lifelong Learning	TexQuest	Improve users' formal education
Goal #2 Digital information resources	Institutional Capacity	Technology and Digital Equity	Improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure
		Broadband	Improve the library's physical and technology infrastructure
	Information Access	Talking Book Program	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources
		Competitive grants (Special Projects)	Improve users' ability to obtain and/or use information resources

State Goal	IMLS Focal Area(s)	Associated Project	IMLS Intent
Goal #3 Literacy and educational attainment	Lifelong Learning	Youth Services	Improve users' formal education
		Summer Reading	Improve users' formal education
	Human Services	Family Place	Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their parenting and family skills
	Economic & Employment Development	Workforce	Improve users' ability to use resources and apply information for employment support
			Improve users' ability to use and apply business resources
	Lifelong Learning	Competitive grants (Texas Reads)	Improve users' general knowledge and skills
	Civic Engagement	Competitive grants (Special Projects)	Improve users' ability to participate in their community
Goal #4 Responsive library services	Institutional capacity	Continuing education and consulting	Improve the library workforce
			Improve Library operations
	Civic Engagement	Responsive services	Improve users' ability to participate in their community
		Competitive grants (Special Projects)	Improve users' ability to participate in their community
	Human Services	Competitive grants (Special Projects)	Improve users' ability to apply information that furthers their personal, family, or household finances; health & wellness; and parenting and family skills

Coordination Efforts with Other State Agencies

The agency is in active collaboration with the Texas Broadband Development Office in support of projects that will provide broadband access in underserved communities. This collaboration is enhanced by a partnership with the Texas Rural Funders Network. Further, the agency is working in partnership with the Texas Education Agency, State Board of Education, and the Texas Parent Teacher Association on a project to update voluntary school library standards. The Texas Workforce Commission has expressed interest in re-establishing its partnership with the agency in support of digital literacy and family literacy initiatives. As projects unfold for the priorities under this new plan, we will continue to actively collaborate with these partners and others to achieve our goals most effectively and efficiently.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of funded projects uses output measures, financial and program performance, and outcome-based evaluation as appropriate for each project. In addition, several projects have advisory groups that assist in evaluating projects on an ongoing basis to ensure that projects align with library needs and operate in an optimal manner. The agency also conducts customer satisfaction surveys for projects as required to provide additional information.

Output measures and advisory groups

The Library Development and Networking Division (LDN) is required to report output measures on its programs to the state. The output measures are:

- Number of library project sponsored services provided to Texans
- Number of resources provided to Texans
- Number of books and other library materials provided to libraries
- Number of library staff trained or assisted to provide information services to patrons

The output measures and definitions, and targets for the agency, are developed for each biennium and reported quarterly. Existing statewide programs of all types have established targets, with projects that are implemented for shorter periods of time counting one or more of these measures as applicable.

The output measures help document the extent of the reach of various projects, with use, ideally, increasing over time.

Goal 1 projects will use the following output measures:

- Number of library project sponsored services provided to Texans
- Number of resources provided to Texans
- Number of books and other library materials provided to libraries
- Number of library staff trained or assisted to provide information services to patrons

In addition, the ARIS projects will count:

- Number of assists with information resources
- Number of web-based resources used

The TexShare Advisory Board provides overall policy guidance regarding the stateside TexShare resource sharing programs. The Board meets three times per year. The TexQuest Advisory committee meets as needed to provide advice regarding the procurement, evaluation, and operation of the electronic resources project. In addition, the TexShare program has working groups for the electronic resources project (advice on procurement and evaluation), the Card program operation, the Courier and ILL programs, and digitization projects.

The TexShare, TexQuest, and ILL programs will conduct annual customer satisfaction surveys.

Goal 2 projects will use the following output measures:

- Number of library project sponsored services provided to Texans
- Number of books and other library materials provided to libraries
- Number of library staff trained or assisted to provide information services to patrons

In addition, the TBP projects will track:

- Number of persons and institutions served
- Number of hours spent assisting patrons
- Number of items circulated
- Outreach efforts to Texans eligible for NLS services

Additionally, LDN will conduct evaluations for each training event. The ratings for each event will help determine customer satisfaction with the continuing education provided.

Projects for Goal 3 and Goal 4 use the following output measures:

- Number of library project sponsored services provided to Texans
- Number of books and other library materials provided to libraries
- Number of library staff trained or assisted to provide information services to patrons

LDN will conduct evaluations for each training event. The ratings for each event will help to determine customer satisfaction with the continuing education provided.

Financial and program performance

Grant programs must report the following information at least quarterly or semi-annually, as well as a final report:

- Reports of grant and program encumbrances and/or disbursements
- Reports of program performance activities

These reports, with supporting documentation, ensure that funds are spent and activities conducted in accordance with the approved grant project and federal cost principles, as well as ensuring that subrecipients demonstrate effective use of the funds.

Outcome Based Evaluation (OBE)

The agency collects outcome information on its programs as appropriate. We recognize the value of this information to the agency, to the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), and to the library and broader community to understand the impact of the programs on the people of Texas. The agency works with each grant recipient to determine outcomes, where appropriate, for their projects and will continue to provide training on outcomes for grantees during the next five years. Major in-person workshop series track both immediate and intermediate outcomes.

Additionally, TSLAC staff will work with each LSTA-funded program to develop meaningful measures based on the intent of each program.

Stakeholder Involvement

The agency provided Texas librarians and other interested persons with opportunities to have input into the development of the plan. Stakeholders, or vested partners, had many opportunities to provide comments on LSTA programs and services through the evaluation of the current five-year plan, as outlined in that document. The outside evaluators also conducted an online survey to gather input on draft goals for the 2023-2027 plan. We asked our two official advisory boards (Library Systems Act Advisory Board and TexShare Advisory Board) for their input and discussed draft goals with the agency's commission in an open meeting. Information about participating in these opportunities was widely disseminated through email lists, our blog, and meetings.

Communication and Public Availability

The agency has a section on its website (<https://www.tsl.texas.gov/ld/pubs/lstaplan/5yearplan.html>) dedicated to information on its LSTA five-year plan, including the text of the current and proposed plans, previous plans, the five-year evaluations, and any related documents and information. We inform the Texas library community about the availability of this information through email lists, our blog, and meetings.

Monitoring

We monitor the performance of LSTA-funded activities through contract compliance, program reports of output and outcome targets, financial reports, site visits as appropriate, internal audits, and regular contact with subrecipients, contractors, and program staff.

TSLAC has formal processes for monitoring its subgrant and contract programs. Program managers with subrecipient project responsibility receive federal grant training.

The evaluation section of this plan describes the output measures and financial information required of the agency. The measures help monitor the progress of subrecipients and contractors in completing their projects or services. Both program managers and grants accounting staff participate in this review. Quarterly or semi-annual narrative reports augment the statistical and financial information for grants and service contracts.

TSLAC program managers are also in close contact with local project staff throughout the year. Contacts may be by telephone, email, or site visits. Site visits may take place to work more closely with projects that are having difficulty, to document projects that have been very successful, and to gather more detailed information about grant projects and processes through discussion with select project staff.

TSLAC staff use the information gathered through these methods to improve agency projects and subaward programs. TSLAC program managers also meet regularly to exchange information and incorporate findings into the agency planning processes.