SLNC State Library of North Carolina

BIENNIAL REPORT | 2020 - 2022

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Scope

This biennial report summarizes the outcomes and accomplishments of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources's State Library of North Carolina between July 2020 and June 2022.

About the State Library of North Carolina

The State Library of North Carolina enriches the lives of North Carolinians through access to information resources, strengthens communities through exceptional library services, and inspires and supports literacy and lifelong learning for all North Carolinians. It has three sections:

- The **Library Development** section helps North Carolina Libraries serve their communities by providing consulting services, supporting continuing education opportunities, and administering grant programs and Aid to Public Libraries fund.
- **Accessible Books and Library Services** circulates books and magazines especially made for persons who cannot use regular printed material because of a visual or physical disability.
- The **Government and Heritage Library** provides library materials and services to support state employees, family history researchers, educators and students, and those interested in North Carolina culture and history.

The State Library is a division of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

The SLNC Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 identified three primary goals:

- **Goal 1: Access** - *Enrich the lives of North Carolinians through access to information resources*
- **Goal 2: Community** - *Strengthen communities through exceptional library services*
- **Goal 3: Education** - *Inspire and support literacy and lifelong learning for all North Carolinians*

Much of the State Library's work toward these goals occurs within its three sections. This report summarizes the work in each unit towards these strategic plan goals between July 2020 and June 2022.

- Library Development's work spanned **all three strategic goals**.
- Government and Heritage Library focused on the **first** and **third** goals.
- Accessible Books and Library Services focused on the **first** and **second** goals.

All made incredible progress during an exceptionally challenging time due to the pandemic. Many pivots were needed to maintain operations and continue serving the people of North Carolina.

The State Library's strategic goals also support and align with the efforts of the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources in meeting Department strategic goals. The Department's five goals include:

- Expand educational opportunities for children and families by increasing access to the state's innovative, interactive, and inspirational natural and cultural sites, programs, and services.
- Boost economic growth through the "Hometown Strong" initiative to support rural communities and other efforts.
- Preserve, enhance, and expand North Carolina's natural and cultural resources in effective, efficient, collaborative, and customer-friendly manner.
- Promote diversity and cultural inclusion in departmental programs, recruitment, administration, and community engagement.
- Evaluate the impacts of climate change and integrate climate change mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency into DNCR programs and operations.

State Librarian

Three individuals served in the State Librarian role, or as the interim State Librarian, between July 2020 and June 2022.

- Timothy Owens: January 2019 – November 2021
- Susan Forbes (Interim): November 2021 – June 2022
- Michelle Underhill: June 20, 2022 –

COVID-19 and the State Library of North Carolina

The State Library of North Carolina pivoted its operations in March 2020 when state and local mandates restricted on-site operations from continuing as usual. Staff worked remotely, and contingency plans were made to ensure programs, services, and resources continued to be available to the service populations who depended on them.

Limited staff was able to return onsite in November 2020. In July 2021, all staff returned to the office using hybrid schedules to limit the number of staff in the buildings at any given time. Another spike in the winter of 2021-22 delayed a full return to work until late February 2022. After that, normal operations resumed.

Telework was a necessity between March 2020 and the Fall/Winter of 2021 during the pandemic. Because telework proved effective and productive, most State Library of North Carolina staff members continued to telework at least one day a week in accordance with the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources Telework Policy, even after normal operations resumed in 2022.

Accessible Books & Library Services

State Library of North Carolina Accessible Books and Library Services (SLNC ABLS) provides books in alternative formats and special devices to access them through programs and services free of charge to people with visual, physical, or reading disabilities that prevent them from using standard print books. It serves approximately 10,000 individuals of all ages and institutions statewide. It is also part of a national network of libraries overseen by the National Library Service for the Blind and Print Disabled, a part of the Library of Congress.

To better reflect its services, on January 1, 2022, the library's official name changed from North Carolina State Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped to State Library of North Carolina Accessible Books and Library Services.

The SLNC Strategic Plan identified three primary goals. The first goal addresses access, and the goal is to enrich the lives of North Carolinians through access to information resources. The second goal pertains to the community and strengthening communities through exceptional library services. The third relates to education and is to inspire and support lifelong learning for all North Carolinians. SLNC ABLS activities for July 2020 through June 2022 centered around the first two goals in the State Library's Strategic Plan, access, and community.

Also of note, Accessible Books and Library Services Director Carl Keehn retired on June 1, 2022.

Goal 1: Access

Because of the pandemic that began in March 2020, the ABLS staff developed new methods to serve patrons throughout the state. Some patrons could use technologies to expedite service while some could not and had to get books via US Mail. ABLS staff were unable to send out books via US Mail from March 2020-July 14, 2020, due to pandemic restrictions restricting staff from being onsite. In addition, the existing phone system at the time restricted staff from accessing calls coming in to the library remotely. On July 15, 2020, the Circulation unit staff were able to return to the office on a limited basis to start sending out books via US Mail again.

Service changes made to serve as many patrons as possible included:

- Introducing a chat service for direct communications with library patrons. From July 2020 to June 2021, there were 521 chats.

- Encouraging library patrons to sign up for Braille and Audio Reading Download (BARD) service so they could download books onto electronic devices themselves.
- Arranging for approximately 1,579 interlibrary loans with the National Library Service's Multistate Center in Utah in July-September 2020 so patrons without internet access could get books via US Mail. Once ABLS staff were able to send out books again, only 155 total interlibrary loan requests went out for the remaining nine months of the fiscal year. For Fiscal Year 2021/2022, only 50 interlibrary loan requests went out.
- Setting up a new VOIP phone system in June 2021 that allowed staff to respond to patron calls while working offsite.
- Completing a project to set up all patrons with US Mail service to get a service called "Books-on-Demand," where patrons receive an average of eight books per audiobook cartridge instead of one book per cartridge, which has been done in previous years. Reader advisory staff set up approximately 2,040 patrons for the service during summer 2020. They also preselected 48,960 books to send to these patrons during this time. Staff also sent a mass mailing to all of these patrons explaining the new service.
- Resuming processing new patron applications sent via US mail In August 2020. Patron Processing Unit staff members worked out a way to process a backlog of around 200 applications.
- Replacing malfunctioning audio players and sending out players to new patrons via US mail recommenced in August 2020 when Machine Unit staff were able to return onsite at the library.
- Working with NLS to get machines sent out to the first 200 new patrons in late 2020 because ABLS didn't have an ample supply of digital players.
- Responding to emails. Email service worked well during this time. We responded to 2,421 emails from July 2020 to June 2021.

Statistics:

June 2020 - June 2021	
Number of Applicants	1,046
Public Service Contacts:	14,683
Braille & Audio Downloads:	142,203
Circulation of books through US Mail:	754,542

June 2021 - June 2022	
Number of Applicants	1,375
Public Service Contacts:	15,933
Braille & Audio Downloads:	124,277
Circulation of books through US Mail:	1,035,081

Enhanced Technology Service to Patrons Needing Technology Help

The increased reliance on technology during the pandemic resulted in an increased need for technology support for patrons. A Library Support Assistant position was reassigned to the Public Service Unit staff. Twanda Walters, hired in May 2022, provides technical support for patrons with technology issues related to ABLS's services and contacts library applicants to explain services.

Information Resources

Titles added to the collections and made available via physical circulation, Books on Demand, and BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download service).

- Audiobooks: 14,517
- Braille Books: 1,991
- Large Print Books: 1,048
- Described Video DVDs: 109

Expansion of Collections

- Added titles in various languages, including but not limited to Hindi, Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian, Hebrew, Mandarin, Urdu, Bengali, Polish, Portuguese, and Vietnamese.
- Revised Large Print Standing Orders to include a larger range of subject areas with more diverse voices, including an African American Voices plan.
- Local recording and braille production focused on titles that reflect a range of cultural heritage of the people of North Carolina, including titles by or about individuals identifying as African American or American Indian.

The expansion of information services and collections also supported DNCR's first goal to expand educational opportunities for children and families by making materials and resources available to individuals of all ages with visual or reading impairments. It also supports DNCR's second goal to boost economic growth in rural communities in that ABLS patrons are located in communities across the state and are served either virtually or with items mailed to them. In addition, it supports DNCR's fourth goal to promote diversity and cultural inclusion in programs by ensuring that materials collected are reflective of a variety of perspectives and available to those with visual or reading impairments.

Systems and Digital Services Activities

- Podcasts:
  - » Tar Heel Talk (began November 2020) – ABLS' patron newsletter in podcast format.
  - » Heard Any Good Books Lately – A monthly review of the top 10 books checked out each month at the library, produced by NC Radio Reading Service and sponsored by Friends of ABLS.
  - » Notable On NOBLE – Locally recorded magazine or book excerpts of the library's locally recorded magazine and book download site, NOBLE (North Carolina BARD Local).
  - » Craig's Desk – A podcast with frequently asked reading technology questions from ABLS patrons.
  - » Local Magazines on Duplication On Demand – These include Carolina Country, Our State, NC Historical Review, and things like the Descriptive video catalog (done as text-to-speech) and Tar Heel Talk (the DTB version).

- Braille Display Pilot – (completed February 2021) The library wrapped up a 2-year pilot program with 25 patrons using a 14-cell portable braille display by Humanware. The aim of the pilot was to see how new and experienced patrons would use the display itself and how the library could work with those patrons for things like logistics and support.
- Online Catalog Survey – (began January 2020) Conducting an ongoing continuing satisfaction and feedback survey on the library's online catalog. Initially ran it starting in January 2020, but then with continued participation, decided to keep it going.

Goal 2: Community

Many programs from SLNC ABLS during this time focused on bringing patrons and the community together to connect during a time many felt disconnected.

Outreach

Staff presented at several conferences and meetings on ABLS services and collections.

Programs

Since in-person library programs were not possible during much of this biennial period, ABLS offered virtual programming. This proved to be very successful. A total of 118 attended the events, and others were able to view them following the event.

Virtual Programming

Six virtual programs were offered between December 2020 and November. This includes the "History's Mysteries" series and winter reading programs.

These programs tie into DNCR Goal 1 to expand educational opportunities for children and families.

Book Clubs

ABLS has two monthly book clubs: a distance book group focused on the Charlotte area, which meets via conference call, and a Raleigh book group that usually meets at the ABLS library before the pandemic. By August 2020, both groups started meeting via conference calls. The Raleigh group still prefers to meet via conference call instead of in person.

Summer and Winter Reading Programs for Adults and Kids

Due to the pandemic, SLNC ABLS suspended its reading programs in 2020 but resumed them in 2021.

Writing Contest

The annual writing contest for ABLS patrons was held from September through December 2021.

The book clubs, seasonal reading programs for adults and kids, and writing contests all support DNCR's first goal to expand educational opportunities and DNCR's fourth goal to promote diversity and cultural inclusion by making these resources available to those with visual or reading impairments.

Volunteers/Studio

Between February and July 2022, SLNC ABLS recorded 16 North Carolina magazines and six books by North Carolina authors or about North Carolina.

The efforts to record locally produced books and magazines tie into DNCR's third goal to preserve, enhance, and expand North Carolina's cultural resources and DNCR's fourth goal to promote diversity and cultural inclusion by making these resources available to those with visual or reading impairments.

Tar Heel Talk Online Newsletter

The Outreach Unit produced eight issues of the Tar Heel Talk Online Newsletter.

Government & Heritage Library

The State Library of North Carolina's Government and Heritage Library (SLNC GHL) is a hybrid library that offers in-person and virtual library services and collections. The library provides direct reference and information services and resources that support the operational needs of state government and research needs of the public related to North Carolina government, history, demographics, statistics, and cultural heritage, including family history. It is the permanent repository for state agency publications and collects, preserves, and provides public access to current and historical state publications in print and digital formats. The Library is a coordinating agency of the State Data Center, responsible for providing direct reference and research services, access tools, and training for librarians, state employees, and the public related to state demographic and statistical data.

The GHL is comprised of two branches: Content and Information Delivery (reference and access services, outreach and education, and digital information management services) and Content Management and Access (cataloging, collection development, State Publications Clearinghouse, and acquisitions). The GHL is an active member of NC Cardinal, a consortium of North Carolina public libraries that share an online catalog and integrated library system (ILS) and share resources with member libraries.

COVID-19 and SLNC GHL

In March 2020, the Governor issued a state of emergency due to the Public Health Emergency of the Global pandemic related to COVID-19. Supervisors were asked to work with their employees to determine if work could be done remotely. Soon after, non-emergency staff were sent home and told to work remotely.

As of July 1, 2020, GHL staff continued to work remotely during the pandemic. Staff developed workflows to continue work while not onsite with the assistance of the State Librarian and the Office Manager, who were physically onsite. Their help with these endeavors was invaluable. Limited staff returned to work onsite as the reading room opened to the public in a limited capacity in November 2021, in accordance with NCDHHS protocols. Resource Sharing and Interlibrary Loan Services also restarted in November 2021. By February 2022, all staff returned to working onsite, and the library resumed regular operating hours.

The SLNC Strategic Plan for 2019-2023 identified three primary goals. The first goal addresses access, with the intent to enrich the lives of North Carolinians through access to information resources. The second goal pertains to community and is to strengthen

communities through exceptional library services. The third relates to education and is to inspire and support lifelong learning for all North Carolinians. SLNC GHL's activities for July 2020 – June 2022 focused on the first goal in the State Library's Strategic Plan of providing access and the third goal in the Strategic Plan of education.

Goal 1: Access

Collections

Providing access to state government publications and published works about North Carolina is a core service of the SLNC GHL. The GHL has a strong online presence with several sites that provide information about North Carolina history and culture. Two sites, NCpedia (www.ncpedia.org) and ANCHOR (www.anchor.org), are freely accessible. Staff also provide online reference assistance via chat. Additionally, GHL library card holders have remote access to many database subscriptions, including Fold3, the News and Observer Historical Newspapers, and the Charlotte Observer Historical Newspapers, among others.

As a member of the NC Cardinal consortium, GHL's collection may be checked out by patrons of other member libraries through resource sharing. Resource sharing was suspended in March 2020 since staff was unable to be onsite due to COVID-19 restrictions. However, with staff returning to onsite work, Resource Sharing resumed in November 2020. For the 2020-2021 year, GHL was able to circulate or provide onsite access to 9,735 items in its collection. Additionally, GHL provided online access to 129,617 through database subscriptions and had 5,659,016 virtual visitors to NCpedia and Anchor sites managed by the SLNC GHL. Five hundred sixteen people used the GHL reading room between November 2020 and June 2021.

In 2021-2022, the use of items in GHL's physical collections increased to 22,054 items. The library returned to its regular operating hours in early 2022, and visitation increased as well. GHL had 1,733 in-person visitors between July 2021 and June 2022.

SLNC GHL manages NCpedia, an online encyclopedia about North Carolina, and ANCHOR, A North Carolina History Online Resource. Both sites run on the same Drupal instance. New articles were written and added to NCpedia and ANCHOR in 2020-2022. The growth of both was supported in part with grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act. In 2020-21, NCpedia and ANCHOR had 6,980,145 virtual visitors. In 2021-2022, NCpedia and ACHOR had 5,959,250 visitors.

Perpetual access to the Charlotte Observer Archives and the News and Observer Archives was secured for all SLNC GHL cardholders (NC residents qualify for an SLNC GHL library

card). These databases are fully searchable and provide access to rich content back to 1886. These resources were made available through grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

During the 2021-2022 year, GHL also obtained perpetual access to Adams Matthews Colonial American records as the first module of the Colonial Caribbean (1624-1832). These collections include Handwritten Technology Recognition to help make the older content accessible. This resource, too, is available to all SLNC GHL cardholders.

These resources were made available through grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

Digital Collections

GHL continued to provide access to materials through collaboration with the State Archives in the Digital Collections. In 2020-21, GHL digitized and provided access to 45,386 images and added over 920 state publications to the digital collections.

In 2021-2022, GHL staff added 148,810 pages to the digital collections. Additionally, GHL began the process of digitizing historical volumes of superseded volumes of the NC General Statutes and making them freely available online.

Digitization of historical publications is funded in part by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

The State Government Web Site Archives team continued to archive North Carolina state government agency websites using the Archive-It web crawler (also used by the Wayback Machine site.) This is a collaborative project between the SLNC GHL and the Division of Archives and Records. North Carolina state agency social media sites are also captured as a part of this project using either the Archive-It tool or another tool called ArchiveSocial.

Reference service

SLNC GHL receives reference inquiries from individuals across North Carolina and beyond. Many questions pertain to researching one's family history, while others relate to general North Carolina history, information from historical state publications, and more.

On the next page are some statistics concerning the reference transactions staff responded to between July 2020 and June 2022.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
Reference requests answered (in-person, email, phone):	3,890	2,858
Reference requests via chat service:	2,398	1,890

Expanding the physical, online, and digital collections and providing reference service all support several of DNCR's goals as well. These resources support DNCR's second goal to boost economic growth by supporting rural areas in that all these resources are available to anyone throughout the state. NC residents have access to physical materials through NC Cardinal and interlibrary loan. Anyone in NC can have an SLNC GHL library card and have access to most of SLNC GHL's subscription databases. Anyone, regardless of where they are located and whether they have a card, has access to NCpedia, ANCHOR, and the NC Digital Collections. These efforts also support DNCR's third goal to preserve, enhance, and expand North Carolina's cultural resources by making them available online and through preserving both print and digital copies of state government publications. They also support DNCR's fourth goal to promote diversity and cultural inclusion in the department as materials and resources available strive to reflect the different cultures and perspectives found across North Carolina.

Goal 3: Education

The SLNC GHL actively engages in educational outreach for its patrons. While challenging, GHL shifted to online programming beginning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Program topics included genealogy, the history of quilts, military history, famous women in NC's history, using newspapers in historical research, and more.

SLNC GHL's virtual programming also supports DNCR's first strategic goal to expand educational opportunities as they are available to all ages, and DNCR's fourth goal is to promote diversity and cultural inclusion, as topics include a range of perspectives concerning North Carolina's history and culture.

Library Development

Library Development (LD) provides leadership and expertise to public, community college, and academic libraries across North Carolina. It supports libraries in implementing best practices and innovative services to meet the information needs of all North Carolinians. LD's core services include administering grants, public librarian certification, professional development training, cooperative resource sharing, and consulting services in the areas of management, evaluation, youth and adult services, and digital literacy. These services promote high-quality, equitable library service throughout North Carolina.

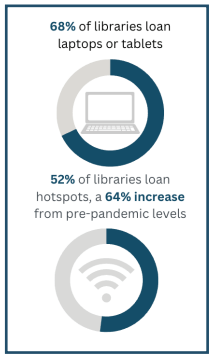
Supporting libraries in recovering from COVID-19

COVID-19 recovery subgrant opportunities:

- COVID-19 mini-grants
- SLNC CARES
- SLNC Adapts
- Adapting Technology
- Bright Ideas

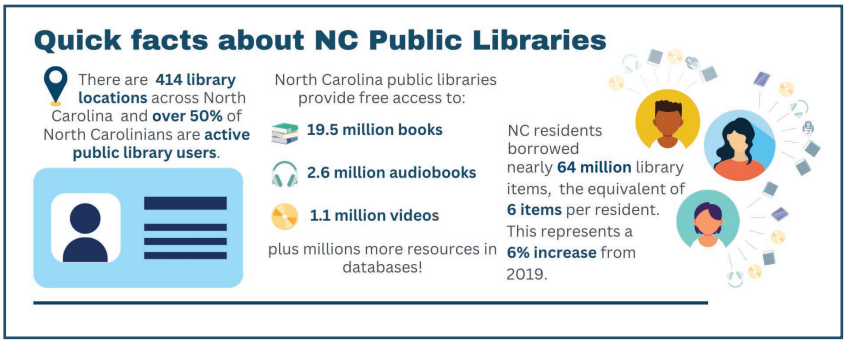
The annual number of grant awards increased **336%** from pre-pandemic levels.

Libraries, like all other industries, were greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. While most physical buildings closed to the public during the height of the pandemic, libraries continued to serve their communities through adapted services, including curbside delivery of library materials, increased Wi-fi signals and access points, lending of hotspots and laptops, and virtual programming for all ages. LD supported libraries through these changes by providing additional funding opportunities, software and hardware to transition physical services to virtual environments and convening virtual communities of practice to share experiences.



In particular, libraries focused on meeting the critical need for broadband access and devices to accommodate learning and working from home by increasing the lending of hotspots and devices. These items were largely purchased through federal subgrants administered by LD. By the end of FY22, over half of NC residents had access to a public library that provided free access to hotspots and devices.

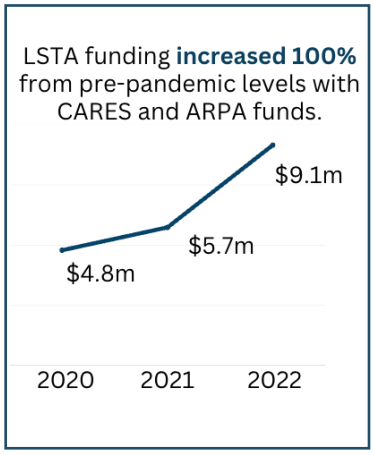
While in-person visitation remains far below pre-pandemic levels, usage of public libraries has increased in other ways, particularly the use of digital materials, which has increased by 45%.



Biennial Service Highlights

Select core services and initiatives are organized below by LD strategic goal with highlights of achieved outcomes and impact. These projects, unless otherwise noted, were supported by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

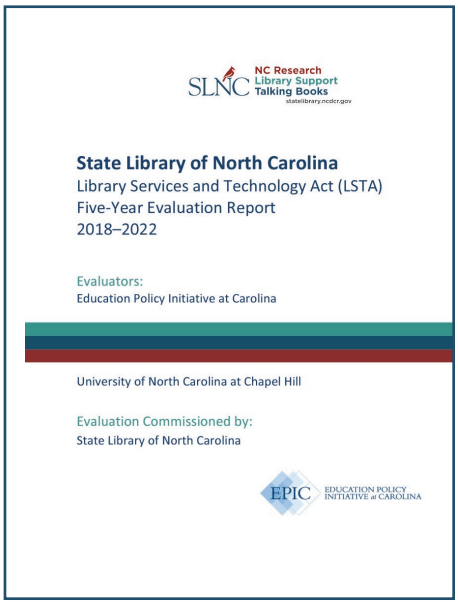
Goal 1: Access



Library Development's first goal is to **improve access** by offering resources and services that anticipate needs and are valued by communities. This goal for Library Development also connects to the State Library's first strategic plan goal for Access.

- Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) Grant Program: LSTA funds are dispersed annually to SLNC from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). SLNC's LSTA program is managed by LD and was guided by the 2018-22 Five-Year Plan goals of Capacity, Access, and Community. Work towards these goals is accomplished through a combination of statewide programs, subawards to local libraries, and special projects managed by libraries or library organizations.

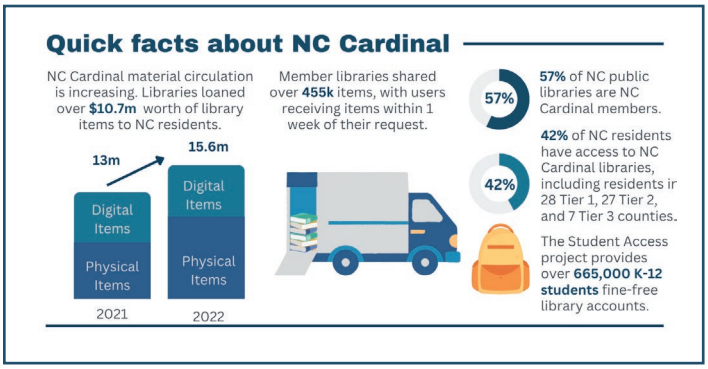
  Over the past three years, pandemic-related funding from the CARES Act and ARPA has increased LSTA funding, allowing for more grant programs offered to libraries, and an increase in total grant awards. Nearly 100% of CARES funds were sub-awarded to local libraries, as were a significant portion of ARPA funds.



As mandated by IMLS, LD conducted a Five-Year Plan Evaluation in 2022. The external and independent evaluation was conducted by the Education Policy Initiative at Carolina (EPIC) and found robust evidence that LD is an effective, innovative, and caring steward of IMLS LSTA grant funds.

EPIC also conducted a needs assessment for the development of the FY23-27 Five Year Plan that identified four key themes: 1) developing human capital; 2) tailoring library supports; 3) pursuing community partnerships, and 4) prioritizing activities to improve diversity, equity, and accessibility among library staff, materials, and programming.

The LSTA grant program also supports DNCR's goals as projects funding at the local level with this money expand educational opportunities for children, families, and for librarians in providing educational opportunities for children and families, including early literacy initiatives. Many grants awarded go to rural areas to support library services, some of which aim to boost economic development by expanding internet access, supporting digital literacy or job search skills, and more. They also support diversity and cultural inclusion as a range of programming is provided through these funds to reflect the needs of varied communities across North Carolina.



- **NC Cardinal**: NC Cardinal is a consortium of public libraries that share an integrated library system (ILS) software to check out, catalog, and share their library materials. This shared software also allows for North Carolina residents to seamlessly search the 7.8 million items held in the collections of member libraries across the state and, with the click of a button, have these materials shipped to their local library in less than a week. Approximately 25% of the costs to run the NC Cardinal consortium are contributed by the member libraries across the state. The remaining costs are covered through grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

  Five staff members manage and provide technical support for the consortium. On average, the help desk handles about 17 tickets per day, from simple software configuration requests to complex software development solutions. NC Cardinal staff also provided more than 136 hours of virtual training or support sessions, reaching more than 1,000 participants. The consortium aims to add 3-4 new library systems per year.

  The NC Cardinal project supports DNCR's second strategic goal by supporting rural communities. Libraries participating in this program span the state, and many are in rural areas. It also supports DNCR's first and fourth strategic goals by making a large range of materials available to anyone requesting them through a participating library.

Goal 2: Community

Library Development's second goal is to **broaden engagement** by seeking out opportunities to cooperate, collaborate, and communicate that libraries are an essential community partner. This goal for Library Development ties into the State Library's second goal, Community.

Racial Equity in Libraries Toolkit

Launched in 2022, the Racial Equity in Libraries toolkit was collaboratively developed by LD and the North Carolina Library Association Roundtable on Ethnic and Minority Concerns to increase awareness and knowledge around structural racism within the library profession in the United States and North Carolina. Available through the SLNC Academy, this interactive toolkit has over 1,700 views, providing library staff training to better understand how organizational structures and personal bias perpetuate inequities along with resources to assess their own library's practices.

This project was supported by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

This project also supports DNCR's fourth goal to promote diversity and cultural inclusion in programs, collaborations, and engagement.

Southeast Collaborative Online Conference

In March 2021, the State Library of North Carolina hosted its second-annual Southeast Collaborative Online Conference, which is a 3-day online conference for library staff nationwide hosted in collaboration with the South Carolina State Library, Georgia Public Library Service, Tennessee State Library and Archives, and the Library of Virginia. In its second year, the conference had over 2,010 attendees from all over the world. Since 2020, each year, the conference has grown and expanded its reach to library staff worldwide.

This conference was supported by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

Digital Inclusion Support

LD has supported digital inclusion in libraries for many decades, but efforts significantly increased in 2018 with the hire of a digital inclusion librarian working collaboratively with LD and the NCDIT Broadband Office. This collaboration resulted in the creation of the NC Toolkit for Digital Readiness.* The success of the Toolkit was recognized when the Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER) awarded SLNC $650,000 upon the recommendation of the Andrew Harris Task Force. These funds have been sub-awarded as GEER Digital Literacy grants to address the impact of COVID-19 in marginalized communities by supporting libraries in implementing the Toolkit and hiring Digital Navigators.

*This project was supported through a National Leadership Grants from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

This initiative supports several of DNCR's strategic goals. It furthers DNCR's first goal by

providing educational opportunities for children and families to address the homework gap. It boosts economic growth in rural areas by expanding internet access and digital literacy, and job search skills as part of DNCR's second strategic goal. It supports DNCR's fourth goal as it ensures access by a diverse range of individuals in communities across North Carolina.

Goal 3: Education



Library Development's third goal is to **increase capacity** by ensuring library staff have essential resources, opportunities, and the support needed to enable them to provide exceptional library programs and services. This goal for Library Development ties into the State Library's third goal, Education.

Professional Development Support

LD staff support professional development of local librarians through consultations, access to resources such as the professional book collection, and direct professional development opportunities. During the biennium, most direct professional development was provided virtually which allowed for significant growth in attendance. LD also created valuable asynchronous learning resources such as the New Library Directors Training and offered access to services such as PCI Webinars and WebJunction, which offer hundreds of trainings.

These trainings were supported by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

North Carolina Public Library Standards

Released in 2022, the North Carolina Public Library Standards offer relevant, dynamic, and flexible community-based standards in a self-assessment format to guide libraries in local planning, management, and evaluation processes. 27 (32%) of the 84 public library systems statewide have accessed the Standards using them for various projects, including advocating for staff positions, strategic planning, and facility planning.

The creation of these updated standards was supported by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.

Additional Services

- **Aid to Public Libraries Fund**: Appropriated by the NC General Assembly, these state funds are intended to promote, aid, and equalize public library service in North Carolina (General Statute 125-7b). FY21 and FY22 appropriations of $14.2 million, respectively, were distributed to 84 eligible public library systems serving all 100 counties.
- **Data & Evaluation**: SLNC participates in the federal-state cooperative Public Libraries Survey program, which gathers data to understand when, where, and how library services are changing to meet the needs of local communities. LD also provides access to data tools such as Gale Analytics and evaluation assistance. These tools are supported through grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.
- **LibGuides**: LD provides and manages access to LibGuides for all NC libraries. LibGuides is an easy-to-use content management system which allows libraries to facilitate digital access to library services, materials, and resources. LibGuides are supported by grant funds from the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act.
- **Public Librarian Certification**: The NC Public Librarian Certification Commission sets minimum standards for public librarians to protect and maintain public library resources, to assure professional management and administration of library services, and to guarantee the best possible public library service to all North Carolinians. Two hundred twenty-three librarians were certified during the biennium.
- **Trustee & Advisory Board Services**: Resources and consulting services to enable trustees and advisory board members to be ethical and effective board members and library advocates.
- **Summer Learning Support**: Support includes software to manage program participation and access to the Collaborative Summer Learning consortium, which creates high-quality summer reading program materials for children, teens, and adults at the lowest cost possible for member libraries.



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The State Library of North Carolina is part of the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

